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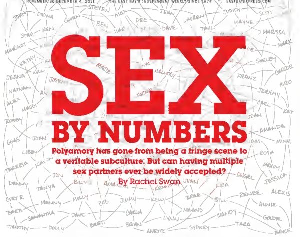

SEX BY NUMBERS

Polyamory has gone from being a fringe scene to a veritable subculture. But can having multiple sex partners ever be widely accepted?

By Rachel Swan

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NEWS & OPINION

LETTERS

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Writing From the Rabbit Hole

If anyone thinks that a protest with anarchists capturing public property to make their statement — coupled with police actions to enforce laws against illegal conduct — is "good" for business, then one might suppose this article is the new primer for making the best of a bad economy by staging similar protests in every downtown area of every city and town in the nation. Perhaps that will stir the economy to new heights and bring the record low employment levels back to acceptable levels.

Of course the Oakland Chamber of Commerce and other business-related organizations are populated with larger (and big) businesses. They can afford the membership dues and they have the staff members to participate in these organizations. Small businesses often do not consider chamber membership a necessity — especially when the economy is making them watch every dime they spend. So why would this article throw innuendo after innuendo like "They contended that the City Hall encampment was bad for downtown businesses, especially small ones. The chamber and the business groups also *purported* to speak on behalf of small businesses in downtown" (emphasis added)? It brings an interesting — but false — counterpoint to the almost certainty that riots and occupations of the public right of ways impede the normal course of commerce. And by attacking the organizations that point that fact out — by making them appear as the enemy — the article gets readership among those who would like to think anarchy does no harm. Well, think for a moment about the $2.4 million in public tax money spent to police the Oakland demonstrations through mid-November, and tell us all if that public money — gone forever — would have been spent had the Occupy Oakland siege not occurred. Is that the way to boost the economy — by pouring $2.4 million down the drain, instead of using it for other things to help the community? Try hard to convince us of that!

No, this article is nothing less than a hit piece suggesting that riots and illegal encampments seizing public property are not such a bad thing after all — and that those who would say differently are part of some "mafia-like" clique made up of those who are among large businesses. This is an Alice in Wonderland premise — and the entire article is straight from the Mad Hatter's mouth.

William H. Thompson, Walnut Creek

The 99 Percent Solution

Long ago in Montgomery, Alabama, they enforced laws to segregate and impoverish black people. Finally, the marginalized people boycotted the buses to protest the society's inequities. Businesses complained. But, even the "progressives" in today's Oakland city government said that the people had the democratic right to protest.

Far away in Egypt, the rich got richer and the poor got poorer. Finally, the marginalized people camped in Tahrir Square to protest the society's inequities. The businesses said it was hurting the economy. But, even the "progressives" in today's Oakland city government said that the Egyptian people should have real democracy.

Today, at home, we see increased unemployment, foreclosures, homelessness, and deterioration in education and other public services. Finally, the marginalized people camped on government property to protest the inequities in our society. But to the "progressives" in today's Oakland city government, democracy must not be that brand. The 99 Percent are too untidy and hurt business. Democracy, it seems, is best confined to the owners of the media, corporations, and other defenders of the status quo.

If democracy is not defined broadly enough to include the 99 Percent, soon, to our land, we the people are doomed.

Peter Haberfeld, Oakland

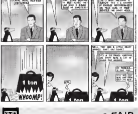
Big Business Isn't All Bad

Come on, look, if folks aren't coming downtown to shop, to go to restaurants or patronize business because of a "perception" of danger, that's a *real* impact — not fabricated. After thirty years, Oakland's downtown was finally coming back, with more restaurants, galleries, great drinking spots, and more. No doubt the Occupy Oakland and Occupy Wall Street movements have brought up important issues regarding income equity, but the reality is that these have become lost in the rhetoric of all the different factions, from socialists to anti-capitalists to anti-cop and anti-war groups. And what's the goal — make all the Republicans suddenly see the light and tax the rich?

I've got a small business and it's clear that we need both big businesses as well as small to make things work. The big businesses you characterize as part of the One Percent in Oakland actually contribute a lot to the city and are committed to making it a better place. Clorox gives tons of money to education and nonprofits and has one of the best affirmative action hiring policies. Big businesses help fund the free Broadway shuttle

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW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SO AS FAR AS YOU'RE CONCERNED, ANYONE WHO SUFFERS AN UNEXPECTED SETBACK IS BASICALLY ON THEIR OWN?
THAT'S WHAT FREEDOM IS ABOUT! THIS IS A COUNTRY OF RUGGED INDIVIDUALISTS! WE TAKE CARE OF OURSELVES! WE DON'T NEED
1 ton
WHOOMP!
1 ton
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(through a business improvement district) pay for events and keep the streets clean and often make it possible for small businesses to open and thrive because their big business employees have to eat lunch and get coffee. It's not all about big vs. small business. That's absurd. We all need each other.

Lastly, everyone I know who actually lives in Oakland has said that Occupy Oakland is disrespecting the city at this point. It's become a joke, and a sad one when there's a murder right in front of City Hall. Is there ever going to be some serious leadership in Oakland to deal with this? I keep seeing the Recall Quan posters going up everywhere, and at this rate I think it's going to happen.

Steven Donaldson, Berkeley

A Small Business in Support of the Big Guys

Why is big business the enemy? Do you know the odds for a small business surviving five years? As a small business owner, I'll tell you this: If there are several big businesses and corporations in downtown Oakland, small businesses will thrive.

Oakland just doesn't get it! For too long, the city's support for small over big business has not been working. I've lived in this city for nearly 25 years, and still no retail. This is not rocket science to figure out.

Jeffrey Lam
Co-owner, Garden Heroes and JLim Designs
Oakland

[illegible]

A Recycling Reality Check

Wow. Where to start with the misinformed plastic recycling article? Perhaps taking both the plastic manufacturers and the Chinese government at their word? Or calling "dumping with a short detour" recycling?

Let's be clear: Recycling is taking an object like a glass bottle and turning it into another bottle, hence the popular "circle of arrows" symbol. Creating disposable lawn furniture from plastic waste is not recycling. Full stop.

I would declare this the topper: When plastic ends up in a creek in SF, the author is clear that this is pollution, but apparently when this waste is dumped into rivers in China, it counts as recycling for local solid waste programs.

(Full disclosure: I worked for the Berkeley Curbside recycling program in the late-Eighties and played a role in a successful union drive with the Industrial Workers of the World as the program went from monthly to weekly pick ups.)

Greg Branson, Yorkville

In Defense of Berkeley's Facility

This article covered many issues relevant to today's recycling industry. However, some comments and conclusions about Berkeley's recycling center were misleading or simply wrong.

The article stated that Berkeley's materials recovery facility (MRF) is "outdated" and requires "major upgrades." But actually, Berkeley's MRF facilities are in excellent condition. All equipment has been recently upgraded or replaced, and current facilities produce excellent quality commodities that are in high demand and bring high market prices. Berkeley's existing facilities provide cost-effective service for Berkeley and are capable of doing so for another decade without major capital investments.

Specifically, Berkeley's container-sorting facilities, which were recently upgraded, produce commodities with minimal contamination while pulling out fourteen different materials, including color-sorted glass. Our commodities are cleaner than more highly mechanized systems because they are mainly hand sorted. Yet our sorting cost is competitive with, and in some cases lower than, costs at larger facilities in the area. In addition, we are paid up to $50 per ton for our glass, while most MRFs in the area do not color-sort glass and are charged about $46 per ton for the mixed glass they deliver to the processor.

Further, Berkeley's paper-sorting and baling facilities, also recently upgraded, operate very efficiently and cost-effectively, have substantial unused capacity, and produce high quality paper bales for marketing. Having a local MRF also means that Berkeley does not incur the financial and environmental cost of transporting mixed recyclables outside the city.

Berkeley is one of a handful of Bay Area cities that operate their own local MRF. Berkeley's MRF has served the City well for more than twenty years and can continue to do so. This year alone, Community Conservation Centers will be paying more than $250,000 to the city from net materials sales!

Jeff Belchamber, General Manager
Community Conservation Centers, Inc. (Berkeley Recycling)

Nate Seltenrich Responds

In the story, we refer to Berkeley's MRF as being "outdated" and "behind the curve" with regards to plastics handling. This is not a comment on the condition of the MRF; instead, as the article explains, this statement refers to the fact that the facility lacks the equipment, staffing, and capacity to sort and bundle for recycling the vast majority of plastics used by Berkeley residents every day. Without this critical piece of infrastructure in place, Berkeley will remain unable to significantly reduce the growing amount of plastics it sends straight to local landfills.

Corrections

In our 11/16 art preview "Piece Work," we misquoted an essay by artist Lena Wolff in the paper Quilt Project catalog. The sentence should have read: "Linked to realms of the heart and hand, to the intimate, to narrative, and even to a sense of our own impermanence, the quilt speaks a human language." In the same article, we also incorrectly implied that some of the artists involved in Wolff's show *Another Country* were quilt makers when in fact they all work in a variety of media.

Letters Policy

Please provide your full name, address, and daytime phone number, although we will only print your name, city, and affiliation. Send submissions to Letters@EastBayExpress.com or Letters, *East Bay Express*, 620 3rd St., Oakland, CA 94607. Letters are edited for length and clarity.

RAISING THE BAR

THREE IMPORTANT LESSONS OF THE OCCUPY MOVEMENT

The youth movement is back, the elite have damaged democracy, and always carry a camera

By Jay Youngdahl

The consensus model of governance is a recognition that democracy is tainted. Stephen Loewinsohn

The Occupy movement has been the most important event in American society in 2011. Its ability to shine a light on the transgressions of the elite and to reaffirm the unity of the eclectic hopes and moods of the 99 Percent has been momentous.

Much will continue to be said about the Occupy movement, especially in the East Bay where police attacked the occupiers. Given our love of trying to predict the future, whether in politics or sports, many will opine on what comes next. But whatever the future holds, it is not too early to see three important yet very different lessons that have come out of the inspirational activities of the occupiers.

First, no matter how audaciously hopeful one is, the future looks bleak for the youth of America and this generation is waking up to their sorry lot. Second, the form of governance and ethical activity in the Occupy events signal a challenge to a blind faith in electoral democracy and to the utilitarian view of individual "rights." The occupiers' actions of consensus, self-help and a willingness to take a physical stand with others have been reaffirmed as crucial requirements for social change. Third, regardless of the speed of electronic forms of dispersal, striking images remain a crucial tool of social protest and a necessary counterweight to our increasingly authoritarian society. A little about each.

The youth of America are in trouble and a bleak future awaits, different but not dissimilar to that which faced American youth in the 1960s and 1970s. Many in that earlier period were forced into the military to fight and die in an unpopular and harmful war. The youth of today are growing up in a period of seemingly endless war while at the same time the Great Recession continues to strip accumulated wealth from Americans at an unprecedented rate. Stop and think — how can the recession be lasting so long? We still have great and creative discoveries in the Bay Area, and people are working and working and working. True wealth continues to be produced but we have less money to spend. What is happening? It is no exaggeration to say that the problem began and continues because the wealth that is being produced is just going to a tiny group. Paul Krugman argues that it is not the One Percent, but the 0.1 Percent.

Like Russian oligarchs, the American super-elite finds its source of wealth not in productive activities but in its influence and control over important governmental regulatory agencies like the SEC and the IRS. The youth and underemployed older Americans will suffer the most from this asset stripping. Many young adults today will be paying for their college education for years and years, as incomes stagnate, an impossible task for many.

But as a group, the youth move quickly. A movement is growing to renounce school loan debt and the Occupy movement is coalescing with the student movement generally. This awakening student activism has the potential to be powerful and breathtaking.

The second lesson can be seen in the ways that the occupiers have organized themselves. Using the consensus model of governance is often frustrating and time-consuming, but with the hijack of American "democracy" by the One Percent, it is a perceptive response by the occupiers. What is most interesting is that it is an acknowledgement that "democracy" today is not the radiant concept that we are taught in school. Through its abuse by our government in its overseas actions — foreign politicians that we like are "democratic," but those we do not are "anti-democratic" — and combined with the gross and obvious corrupting effect of money on the American political process, the bloom is off the democratic rose.

Even the best "democratically" elected politicians, such as Jean Quan and Barack Obama, have no choice but to look out for the large moneyed interests first. Our recent story by Robert Gammon showed the true nature of the local corporate interests that are sure to have influenced Quan. And President Obama and the democratically controlled Congress in late 2010 shamelessly extended the Bush tax cuts for the wealthy. His appointees have been currying favorites with the Wall Street moneyed elite ever since, refusing to investigate crooked bankers or use the power given them by Congress after the 2008 crash. To be fair, with the current election financing scheme, politicians like Obama who want to be reelected must kow tow to the financial elite for campaign contributions. The choice of the occupiers to use a consensus model of government, even with its frustrating flaws, is a recognition by them that the elite have tainted democracy.

Through the use of their organizational model, the occupiers have taught us more. In order to build a world safe for our families and neighbors, we must do the "right thing" in all aspects of our life. A full ethical and moral gaze, not just when it serves us personally, is a requirement for a just and equal society. Too many of us — myself included — often cut corners for our own benefit. "It is just a little thing," we say. But one of the lessons of our modern period is that there are many things — from the failure to pick up your dog's poop to the creation of exotic financial instruments — that have little harm if done by only one person. But if done by too many, the results are messy or catastrophic. The occupiers worked hard to do the "right thing" in all they did. Like all humans they made some mistakes. But a recognition that we all must try to live by a holistic creed of compassion and concern for others is the only way to make this world work for the 99 Percent.

Finally, there is a third and quite mundane lesson: Carry your cellphone with you at all times and become proficient with the video function. The photographs of UC Davis police pepper spraying protesters and the 84-year-old woman who was sprayed at Occupy Seattle have evoked images akin to Christian descriptions of the suffering of Jesus. Like the iconic pictures of the Vietnamese children that our country napalmed in the Vietnam War, these images will live on long after words have been forgotten. Images affect the body, and a good argument can be made that ideas need to be felt in the body in order to move us.

Our nation is becoming more and more authoritarian. One of the reasons that the cops have been so violent in the Occupy protests is that over the last few years they have been fed a steady diet of anti-terrorism training and weapons. Implicit in their instruction is that the old rules of the treatment of American citizens are changing. Twentieth-century civil rights are being discarded. Combine this with an increasing number of Nixonian governmental whitewashes, and you can bet that the police assault on Iraqi veteran Scott Olsen at Occupy Oakland is the subject of a behind-the-scenes cover-up today. In our image-laden society, one of the only ways to protect ourselves is to take pictures and video of violent or inappropriate police activity. Sometimes cops are going to arrest people for doing this, but — at least for now — such prosecutions will fail.

No matter how scruffy some of the occupiers seem, or how kooky some of their tactics may appear, all of us in the 99 Percent owe them a debt of gratitude. We are in an extended "emperor has no clothes" moment, and the occupiers are playing the role of the little kid who stood up to royalty. The kid in that story did not have a full-fledged plan for the emperor. Sometimes pointing out the obvious in a way for all to see is enough. ●

Jay.Youngdahl@EastBayExpress.com

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SEVEN DAYS

PEPPER SPRAYING JESUS

The iconic shot of a UC Davis cop and his pepper spray became an instant Internet meme. But will it help galvanize support for the Occupy movement?

By Robert Gammon

The Occupy movement has already generated numerous iconic images. But none has been as powerful or promises to be as long-lasting as the shot of UC Davis police Lieutenant John Pike casually and brutally pepper spraying student protesters as they sat peacefully, linked arm-in-arm. The image so perfectly captured a moment in time that it immediately went viral on the Internet, prompting amateur web editors to photoshop Pike into classic works of art — from him spraying the screamer in Edvard Munch's famous painting to nailing Jesus with pepper spray in *The Last Supper*.

Pike and his spray struck a chord in the popular consciousness because the image seemed to define law enforcement's over-the-top response to the Occupy movement. From police in Oakland showering thousands of mostly peaceful protesters with tear gas and other less-than-lethal weapons to UC Berkeley cops and Alameda County Sheriff's deputies hitting peaceful student protesters with their batons on the Cal campus, law enforcement has repeatedly met nonviolence with violence during the Occupy protests. At times the images have been reminiscent of white authorities in the South turning fire hoses on black students during the early-Sixties.

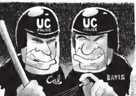
Those iconic photographs helped launch the Civil Rights Movement and galvanized support for it. Indeed, nonviolent protesters peacefully challenging the status quo has always been a successful tool for bringing about societal change. When authorities overreact and turn violent against protesters, the protesters immediately become the public's favorite underdog, while the authorities become objects of ridicule. As Gandhi famously said: "First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win."

Still, it remains to be seen whether the Pike photograph and the nonviolent actions of student protesters will prompt the same kind of results for the Occupy movement over the long haul. In the short term, UC Davis officials put Pike and another cop on leave, along with Police Chief Annette Spicuzza. Students, faculty, and protesters also called on UC Davis Chancellor Linda Katehi to resign. Katehi resisted, but UC President Mark Yudof, her boss, said he was "appalled" at what had happened and appointed former Los Angeles Police Chief William Bratton to conduct an investigation.

Katehi, meanwhile, told the *Sacramento Bee* that Pike and other campus police officers had disobeyed her direct instructions to not use force against Occupy protesters. "We told them very specifically to do it peacefully, and if there were too many of them, not to do it, if the students were aggressive, not to do it," she said, referring to instructions she and her office gave to police about removing Occupy tents and protesters on campus. "And then we told them we also do not want to have another Berkeley." The last comment referred to the earlier incident at Cal involving police and their batons. According to Katehi, Spicuzza said the decision to pepper spray protesters was made by Pike.

Regardless, the pepper spray scandal is sure to bring lawsuits. The *San Francisco Chronicle* reported that Pike and other UC Davis cops appear to have violated the law. The newspaper noted that the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in 2000 that police can only use pepper spray to prevent harm to themselves or someone else. And no evidence has surfaced so far that the nonviolent protesters at UC Davis posed a threat to anyone. Still, legal experts say that if the protesters sue, it will be up to a jury to decide whether UC Davis cops broke the law, and juries often side with police officers in use-of-force cases.

In Berkeley, meanwhile, Chancellor Robert Birgeneau apologized to the protesters. But that wasn't enough to quell calls for his resignation as well. On Monday, the Cal Academic Senate planned to take up a no-confidence vote of Birgeneau and other campus leaders, the Bay Area News Group reported. In addition, Occupy protesters temporarily shut down a UC regents meeting on Monday that was being held via videoconference in four California cities.



Shop Local, Shop Telegraph

The Shop Local movement is gaining traction in cities throughout the nation, but patronizing small independent retailers will be more important than ever this year along Telegraph Avenue in Berkeley. The commercial strip has suffered numerous blows over the years, but none were likely as substantial as the recent fire that gutted an apartment building and destroyed several businesses, including Cafe Intermezzo, Raleigh's Bar and Grill, and Thai Noodle II.

The blaze at the Sequoia apartment building was the largest in the East Bay since the 1991 hills fire. It burned for seventeen hours, and left the building red-tagged and permanently uninhabitable. The city also had to close portions of Telegraph during and after the fire, forcing retailers to shutter as well. Berkeleyside reported that Amoeba Music lost $20,000 worth of business during the weekend of the fire. "This is a hideous development to an already totally beat up Telegraph," Amoeba owner Marc Weinstein told the website. "We are lucky nobody got hurt. This is another hit in the face for the avenue."

Built in 1916, the Sequoia apartment building may have to be demolished. And the city and Telegraph merchants are urging East Bay residents to spend their money locally this holiday season. "The message we want to get out is that most stores on Telegraph are open for business," Dave Fogarty, Berkeley economic development project coordinator, told Berkeleyside. "We would like to encourage shopping on Telegraph because of this terrible blow."

Over the past twenty years, Telegraph has suffered numerous setbacks. Directly across from the Sequoia is a vacant lot that used to be home of the Berkeley Inn, which burned down two decades ago. The Cody's building across Haste Street from the Sequoia remains empty after the famous bookstore closed in 2006. And earlier this year, Blake's on Telegraph, one block away, closed after being in business for more than a half-century. Finally, last week, after the fire, the new owners of Andronico's supermarkets announced that they plan to close their store at Telegraph and Derby Street as well.

Three-Dot Roundup

Several wealthy Californians — members of the One Percent — are pushing plans to raise personal income taxes on the rich in the state. The *Sacramento Bee* reported that one of the proposals, which is backed by Molly Munger, the daughter of billionaire investor Charles Munger, would raise $10 billion a year specifically for K-12 public schools in California. ... And Lawrence Berkeley Lab officials have put off making a decision about where to locate the lab's second campus until early next year. ■

Seven Days is culled from our news blog, 92510.

Robert.Gammon@EastBayExpress.com

LEGALIZATION NATION

INSIDE THE CANNABIS CLOSET

Oakland's newest web celeb just wants to talk.

By David Downs

Coral Fish

Oakland Internet celebrity "Coral Fish" of CoralReefer420.com passed her one millionth cumulative YouTube view in November. The milestone marks a new high point for the social media artist who over the past eighteen months has found fame, followers, and promises of filthy lucre by doing what she does every morning — taking fat bong rips of hash, blowing them at the camera, and bidding viewers a good day.

Coral's intimate, relaxed, candid video posts — and yes, her bit on Twitter — is all part of what might be called an intuitive aesthetic of self-disclosure. Twenty-three years old with platinum blond hair, fair skin, manicured eyebrows, make up, pierced ears, and an elf-like smile, Coral takes viewers literally into the cannabis closet with her.

For first-time viewers, it's a bit surreal, and for fundamentalist Middle America CoralReefer420.com is a porthole into an unholy parallel universe. "One commenter said their doctor suggested they watch my videos to see a cannabis patient in a normal setting — that blew my mind," Coral said by phone, walking to work in San Francisco last week.

Born in the US Virgin Islands, Coral grew up in California acclimated to pot. She was raised on the headlines of the Wo/Men's Alliance for Medical Marijuana in the *Santa Cruz Sentinel*. At ten or twelve years old, she remembers the Santa Cruz City Council giving cannabis away on the front steps of City Hall and "thinking my city was doing right."

Coral said she smoked pot a little in high school, then turned eighteen and moved around a bit before settling in Oakland six months ago. She works as a waitress in San Francisco and has a cannabis recommendation from a doctor for anxiety and depression. "Since I began regulating and medicating with cannabis every day I have not been interested in abstaining," she said. "I see myself as well treated, and prior to cannabis treatment I felt very out of control of my emotions. Cannabis has been really helpful to me. It helps me see new angles for problems that I may spend hours dwelling on — and helps clear my mind."

Coral is a creature of the Internet, and said the web project "started really as me playing with my pet rats, hanging out, showing off tricks they can do. No cannabis involved. They were fun but boring. One day I was blogging about my day, starting a new job and smoking a bowl.

"The response was people had never heard of a woman having a conversation while smoking weed," she continued. "They were only used to — I don't know — people laughing hysterically or getting super high, so sort of talking to them and smoking was revolutionary, so I kept doing it."

She kept posting on Twitter, then bought her own domain name, and now hosts it through Tumblr. She codes the site herself — it's electric purple with a huge weed background and a series of pictures and video posts. Coral keeps track of strains that she's sampled in 2011, and has just started "@NewsNug," a separate news feed. "I try and keep my channel more personal," she said. "It's stuff that I want to tell my friends.

"I'm a little bit shy speaking in front of crowds," she continued. "People can put on a video, sit back, and pack a bowl and they are sitting in a smoke circle with me. It makes me feel more comfortable, rather than like I'm just being stared at."

Through break-ups, moves, and even her mom's cancer treatment, Coral said her web fans "have provided so much companionship at really lonely times in my life."

The most rewarding feedback: "The day before my birthday this year a baby was born and they named her Coral," she said. "They sent me a picture of baby Coral. It changed my life that someone felt that connected with what I was doing."

Rather than riling the drug warriors of the world, Coral said her biggest critics tend to be females on Twitter. They say her partially nude profile pic is bad for women, makes her a bad girlfriend, and amounts to cheating on her boyfriend, etc. "I would never listen to a man tell me how to dress or how to act, and when I hear it from women, I'm just not interested," she said. "I'm very happy with my body. I'm not explicit anywhere. There are no naked pictures of me. I just don't like following the norm."

This holiday season, Coral again conducts her Stoney Santa, and fans have sent in anywhere from $1 to $100 for presents. The money is pooled, presents bought, and packages shipped out, with her donations paying for shipping and handling. "Nothing illegal will cross state lines," she clarified.

The coming year and beyond is kind of a big question mark, though. "I wouldn't mind going down to waitressing three days a week so I could spend more time editing and speaking to people," she said. "I don't know."

With ten thousand YouTube subscribers, about eight thousand Twitter fans, Coral said she has to resist requests to review custom pipes and bongs, and to commercialize her brand. "I want to stay a citizen and private and personal. So many people in my place take it commercial and get sponsors and logos and ads. I want to keep blogging as I [illegible] as I would be doing without a camera." ●

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This column is culled from our blog of the same name.

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REPORTING ON CALIFORNIA CANNABIS CULTURE
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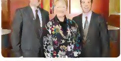

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FATE OF NATIONAL FORESTS IS UNCERTAIN

Competing bills in Congress would either protect national forests or open them up to oil and gas development, motorized recreation, and logging.

By Susanne Rust

Nearly 60 million acres of national forests were put off-limits to motor vehicles, road building, and logging during the Clinton administration. And a bill was introduced recently in Congress that would turn that rule into law.

According to US Senator Maria Cantwell (D-Washington), a sponsor of the bill along with US Representative Jay Inslee (D-Washington), the Roadless Area Conservation Act would protect "hundreds of thousands of jobs across the country." Various forms of this bill have been introduced by Inslee and Cantwell since 2002. "There is an urgent need to safeguard the remaining undeveloped forest lands as a home for wildlife, a haven for recreation, and a heritage for future generations," Cantwell said.

But not everyone is convinced. And one California congressman wants to make sure that bill never sees the light of day. Instead, US Representative Kevin McCarthy, a Republican, introduced a bill — the Wilderness and Roadless Area Release Act — in April that would release about 43 million of those acres to be used for oil and gas development, motorized recreation, and logging.

"Millions of acres of land across the United States are being held under lock and key unnecessarily," McCarthy said. "My bill acts on recommendations made by government agencies managing those lands so they are opened up for increased public use."

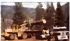
The recommendations upon which McCarthy's bill relies are from a 1979 US Forest Service report that the US Environmental Protection Agency had called "inadequate, because of its use of unsupported and undocumented statements, its lack of related data on demands for resources, and its unbalanced economic approach."

The report recommends keeping 15 million acres protected, allocating 36 million for nonwilderness, and holding an additional 11 million aside for further planning.

"This is just common sense," McCarthy said. "By opening these lands up to the residents of our local communities and across the country for their use and enjoyment, we can help create jobs, boost local economies, and reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires."

But Joe Walsh, a spokesman for the US Forest Service, said the document is not one the Forest Service uses anymore. "Science changes," Walsh said. "We like to use the latest science we have so we're always on the cutting edge."

According to the 1979 report, "Resource trade-offs were compelling reasons for allocating a roadless area to either the wilderness or non-wilderness category.



Logging in Sierra National Forest. Wikimedia Commons

"Areas with high oil and gas potential were normally not allocated to wilderness," the report stated. It added that "high timber values have been used as reasons to allocate an area to non-wilderness."

Andrea McCarthy, a spokeswoman for Kevin McCarthy, said it makes sense to allow local land managers to have a say in how to use these resources. "These decisions should be made on a local level, not left up to bureaucrats in DC," she said. She added that the bill "does not terminate existing, congressionally designated wilderness areas, nor does it release wilderness study areas or roadless areas deemed suitable for wilderness."

The roadless rule, which was issued by President Bill Clinton, was the result of the largest public lands review process in US history. It also has been in the courts since its inception. Five months after it was implemented, a federal court in Idaho blocked it. Then, in 2005, the Bush administration repealed the rule and replaced it with a state petition process.

SPITLER SAID MCCARTHY'S BILL IS A "WHOLESALE ATTACK ON VALUES THAT AMERICANS HOLD DEAR AND A GRAND GIVEAWAY TO CORPORATE POLLUTERS."

Attorneys general in California, Oregon, New Mexico, and Washington sued, and in 2006 a federal judge ruled in their favor. The case then went to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, which ruled in favor of the Clinton rule.

Then in 2008, a federal judge in Wyoming blocked the rule. That ruling then went to the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals, which in October ruled again in favor of the Clinton rule. With two agreeing rulings from the circuit courts, the rule will stand — unless a new law is made.

"The courts agree on the ruling," said Paul Spitler, a policy expert with The Wilderness Society. "But Congress trumps rulings. And if McCarthy's bill gets through, these rulings are irrelevant." The Wilderness Society supports the Clinton rule.

Spitler said McCarthy's bill is a "wholesale attack on values that Americans hold dear and a grand giveaway to great corporate polluters."

California Watch is a project of the nonprofit Center for Investigative Reporting in Berkeley. Contact the author at SRust@CaliforniaWatch.org. For more visit CaliforniaWatch.org.

Editor@EastBayExpress.com

MARCIE HOODGE LOSES, AGAIN

A judge throws out a libel suit that the former Oakland mayoral candidate filed against the *Express*

By Robert Gammon

During the final weeks of the 2010 Oakland mayor's race, candidate Marcie Hodge filed a lawsuit against the *East Bay Express*, claiming that a Full Disclosure column "The Baffling Mayoral Bid of Marcie Hodge" (6/23/10) was libelous. The column raised numerous questions about how Hodge was financing her mayoral campaign and whether she was running as a spoiler to help fellow candidate Don Perata defeat his main rivals, councilwomen Jean Quan and Rebecca Kaplan. Last week, an Alameda County judge dismissed Hodge's lawsuit in its entirety on the grounds that it was without merit, and awarded attorney fees to the paper and its lawyer, Joshua Koltun.

But the litigation that Hodge brought against the *Express*, this reporter, and former editor Stephen Buel was more than just a frivolous libel suit. It was also a comedy of errors that raises further questions as to Hodge's fitness for public office. She is a member of the Peralta Community College District Board of Trustees, and as such, her decisions affect the education of tens of thousands of East Bay residents.

Hodge filed the lawsuit in October of last year, claiming that she had suffered $20 million in damages. But it was unclear at the time whether she was serious about pursuing the case because she did not serve the *Express* or this reporter with legal papers as required by law. The *Express* decided not to write about the lawsuit at the time. "After discussing it, and knowing that our facts were correct and substantiated, we saw no reason to publicize this lawsuit during the mayor's race," said Jody Colley, publisher of the *Express*.

In February, Hodge's sister, Nicole Hodge Amey, who was also her attorney, filed an odd declaration with the court. She said that she had not served the *Express* with the lawsuit because she could not find the "correct defendants." The declaration was hard to believe not only because the *Express'* address in Oakland is easily found through an Internet search or by looking in the White Pages, but because Hodge's lawsuit itself included the newspaper's correct address. In short, Hodge Amey could have easily found the *Express* headquarters and the correct defendants if she had read the lawsuit that she filed.

Hodge came in fifth in the 2010 Oakland mayor's race

Robert Gammon

Finally, in April, Hodge Amey served the lawsuit on this reporter and the *Express*. The papers were hand delivered to the *Express* office, but strangely, they were enclosed in an envelope addressed to a location in San Leandro that is home to a tire-service repair shop — TCI Tire Centers, to be exact. For the record, the *Express* has no relationship with TCI Tire Centers and has never been located in San Leandro.

After being served with the suit, the *Express* obtained a media law expert and attorney named Joshua Koltun. This reporter also decided to re-examine Hodge's finances and those of her unsuccessful mayoral campaign (she came in fifth with 3.1 percent of the ranked-choice vote).

During the campaign, Hodge had kept the identities of her political donors and how she had spent her mayoral campaign funds a secret until after the election, in apparent violation of state law — much as she had done in previous campaigns. Candidates are required by law to disclose their donors and how they spend their money prior to an election so that voters can know who is bankrolling each candidate's campaign.

Yet even after Hodge finally filed her official donor statements in the days and months following the election, her campaign's finances remained murky. As Full Disclosure reported in September 2010, her donor statements in previous years showed that several of Perata's most reliable contributors had helped fund her unsuccessful campaign for Oakland City Council in 2006 and her Peralta reelection bid in 2008. Her previous statements also showed that Perata's 2010 mayoral campaign manager, Larry Tramutola, had been her 2006 campaign manager.

Although Hodge's 2010 mayoral statements showed no such connections with Perata, they also appeared to fail to account for several campaign expenditures and where she got the money to pay for them. For example, the *Oakland Tribune* reported in February that Hodge failed to list the $1,500 cost of buying an ad in the *Tribune*. The newspaper also reported that Hodge failed to fully account for the costs of buying numerous billboards in the city.

In response to this reporter's questions last year, Hodge maintained that she was financing much of her campaign herself. However, it's unclear where she got the money, because Hodge declared on her official statement of economic interests that she had no job, investments, or income that produced more than $500 annually.

Alameda County property records show that Hodge owns a home in East Oakland. But she did not list that home as her official place of residence. If she does live there, then she should have declared it under state law, and if she rents it out for more than $500 a year, then she must report it on her statement of economic interest — which she did not.

As a result, this reporter decided to visit the home Hodge owns to see if she lives there or rents it out. The woman who answered the door said that Hodge does not live there. This reporter then asked the woman to ask Hodge to call, and she said she would. Hodge, however, did not call to answer questions about the home she owns.

Instead, a short time later, Hodge went to court to seek a restraining order against this reporter, alleging that she was being "stalked." However, in another weird move that defies explanation, Hodge claimed that this reporter is black. For the record, this reporter is white.

Hodge and her sister also didn't seem to be able to figure out how to serve the *Express* with the restraining order documents as required by law. All it would have taken was to come to the *Express* office and ring the doorbell, but they didn't do that, resulting in a delay of restraining order hearings. Eventually, Hodge properly served the *Express*, and then an Alameda County judge promptly refused to grant the restraining order, noting that the First Amendment allows journalists to knock on people's doors and ask questions.

In the libel suit, Hodge claimed that the 2010 Full Disclosure column was defamatory because she said she had not run as a spoiler in an effort to siphon votes from Quan and Kaplan and to help Perata win. In response, the *Express* attorney, Koltun, noted that the column in question never concluded that Hodge was running as a spoiler.

Instead, the column quoted two prominent black leaders in Oakland who believe that Hodge was. The column also noted that Hodge was spending lots of money in the campaign and that she had a history of not disclosing the identities of her donors until well after the election. The column also noted that several of Perata's most trusted donors had helped bankroll her previous campaigns and that Tramutola had been her campaign manager previously.

To dismiss the suit, Koltun filed a special motion to strike, also known as an anti-SLAPP motion. It's a legal maneuver under California law that's often used to dismiss frivolous lawsuits filed against news organizations. Koltun noted that the column was protected speech under the First Amendment.

On November 17, Superior Court Judge Marshall Whitley issued his decision, agreeing with Koltun's arguments and dismissing Hodge's suit completely.

"Anytime you get sued for $20 million it is a big thing," Colley said. "But our paper has not and will not crumble under this kind of harassment. As a newspaper we have a privilege and in fact an obligation to use our rights under the First Amendment to continue our thirty-year tradition of useful news and commentary. No matter the financial threats, we will continue to be a strong voice and conscience in the East Bay." ■

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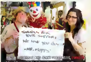
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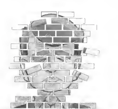
THE NEW FACE OF BANKRUPTCY

As the economy continues to sputter the average wealth of those who file for Chapter 7 is rising.

By Laura Hautala



It could be mistaken for a courtroom wedding. The couple sits side by side in a government office in Oakland, facing a solemn official. Rows of royal blue chairs form a gallery and fluorescent light fills the room. "Yes," the man and woman answer quietly but firmly to each question from the gentle-voiced official.

But instead of making their wedding vows the pair is swearing that the information in their bankruptcy paperwork is true and complete. These are federal bankruptcy proceedings, and the official is a trustee of the Department of Justice. Like thousands of Northern Californians, this couple from Berkeley has filed for personal bankruptcy despite significant assets and past income.

More and more people in Northern California have faced the prospect of personal bankruptcy since the recession. The number of Chapter 7 bankruptcy cases filed here more than doubled between 2007 and 2010, increasing each year. The region, which runs along the coast from Monterey County to the Oregon border, saw more than 24,000 bankruptcy cases in 2010, and the Berkeley couple's case is one of more than 17,500 filed by September of this year.

And with home values continuing to sink, personal bankruptcy in Northern California is now spreading to higher income brackets. Figures from the US courts show that the median income of Chapter 7 filers has risen 30 percent since 2007, while the average amount of debt they face has increased by nearly the same amount. By 2010, half of bankruptcy filers in Northern California made more than $37,000 a year; overall, filers declared about $410,000 in average debt.

At the proceedings, the couple from Berkeley says their income won't cover their debts. They bought a second house and an undeveloped lot in 2005 with loans that now total more than $1 million; the property is severely underwater. Their retirement fund has dwindled to less than half its original size, due in part to large withdrawals in the past two years.

On their bankruptcy forms, they reported their average monthly income as $2,100. But in 2010, their income from Social Security and retirement savings reached nearly $160,000. The value of their assets, which include their second house and all personal belongings, are almost equal to their debts of more than $1 million.

Bankruptcy attorney Tony Carballo said easy access to debt from credit card companies and mortgage brokers before the recession caused serious problems for his clients once the economy started to tank. Their debts were for "ridiculous amounts that even people at higher income levels would not be able to pay," Carballo said. Then the recession hit. "They lost their jobs, got reduced pay and bonuses."

Certain loans like adjustable-rate mortgages led to skyrocketing debts just as income was decreasing. Marc Del Piero, a bankruptcy trustee in Monterey County, describes it as a "one-two punch."

"The mortgages adjusted so that people had to pay the interest and the principle," Del Piero said. "They were unable to make the increased house payments at the very time either they or their spouse were losing their jobs or experiencing a decrease in hours that they were working."

The result has been a wave of people caught completely off guard by their weakened financial standing. "They never expected to file for bankruptcy," Carballo said.

The Berkeley couple's second house and the adjacent lot are in a vacation community on a quiet island in the Puget Sound. The yard leads down to a boat landing. Before they filed for bankruptcy, they bought a $500 outboard motor. It would be a nice way to retire.

For those who never imagined they'd be overwhelmed by debt, bankruptcy can be an unfamiliar and terrifying prospect. Carballo said he's helped file paperwork for people "who come in scared to death. They have the idea that when you file for bankruptcy you basically give everything over to the court: your clothing, your old cars, whatever you have. If you have fifty cents in your pocket, you turn it in, and then you file for bankruptcy."

The fear and shame associated with having to declare bankruptcy can run deeper for those used to a higher standard of living. The Berkeley couple, for example, declined to be interviewed for this story, and the *Express* is not naming them because they aren't ready to go public.

But in reality bankruptcy does not have to be devastating. Chapter 7 discharges personal debts, but the law allows filers to keep personal belongings like clothes and furniture. Exemptions in federal law also create protections for valuables like heirlooms and jewelry — up to a certain value — and for public benefits like Social Security and unemployment benefits.

Once filers realize what they can keep, "they're kind of pleasantly surprised," Carballo said, "considering that they have been suffering for sometimes two to three years."

Filing for Chapter 7 bankruptcy won't discharge mortgage debt, so the couple from Berkeley will surrender their second property to the lender. But they're seeking exemptions for the rest of their retirement fund, office furnishings, and the rest of their personal property. They'll also keep their car, which Del Piero said is allowed when there isn't much equity left in a vehicle and the filers will be able to make car payments after the bankruptcy clears their other debts.

Debtors often fear further harassment from credit card companies and other creditors if they file for Chapter 7. In the Oakland bankruptcy office, the Berkeley couple finishes a five-minute, sworn and recorded interview with the Department of Justice trustee; their creditors have thirty minutes to formally come forward. None show up for any of the hearings this morning.

THE NUMBER OF CHAPTER 7 CASES FILED HERE MORE THAN DOUBLED BETWEEN 2007 AND 2010, AND FIGURES SHOW THAT THE MEDIAN INCOME OF FILERS HAS RISEN 30 PERCENT.

Nonetheless, convincing someone who takes pride in paying their debts to file for bankruptcy is a tough sell. Bankruptcy attorney Carl Gustafson has had visits from experienced investors who are considering filing. They would rather drain their 401ks and life savings than back out of a debt.

Gustafson said he has to use his "investor mindset" to convince them to file. "I ask them who they originally got their mortgages from," Gustafson said. "If they say Wachovia, WaMu, World Savings, SunTrust — the list goes on — if they say any of those banks, then I tell them that years ago those banks filed for bankruptcy, and they're already out."

Bankruptcy's most disruptive effect is on the credit report, where it can stay for up to ten years. "That's very significant," Del Piero said. "Bankruptcy can mean the inability to secure loans for any one of a number of reasons. It's not an absolute bar, but it makes it more difficult."

Years down the road, lenders averse to a past bankruptcy might balk. "That can potentially effect buying a car, buying furniture, buying anything on time, and obviously potentially securing a loan for a house," Del Piero said.

This can extend to businesses owned by someone filing for bankruptcy. "If they operate a business, then ongoing credit will be limited," Gustafson said. "If a client is in a partnership, sometimes those partnerships may be disrupted."

But by discharging debts, personal bankruptcy can improve a cash-strapped debtor's position. "The irony there is that the credit score generally bounces back higher than when they filed" within about six months, Gustafson said. "Creditors buy lists of people who filed for bankruptcy to solicit them."

Credit card companies close their accounts with customers who file for bankruptcy, but Del Piero said the same customers can open new accounts as soon as they're offered a line of credit.

Gustafson still said he doesn't recommend bankruptcy to every client. "A bigger danger of filing for bankruptcy is if you need it even more in the future," Gustafson said. "One of the things I look at is whether my clients have ongoing medical conditions."

Because it's a measure of last resort, "very, very few people file for bankruptcy repeatedly," Del Piero said. "Most people who end up in bankruptcy are honest, hardworking people to whom really bad things have happened. And that's probably the saddest thing that's gone on in our economy."

"That's the toughest part of my job," Del Piero added.

After they finish their interview with the trustee, the couple from Berkeley gets up to leave. The man puts his hand on his wife's back as they walk out without speaking.

"Bankruptcy codes were created to be able to give people a second chance. And it's not so much the end for them as the opportunity to realize a new beginning," Del Piero said. "Sometimes it's difficult for them to appreciate that until after it's over."

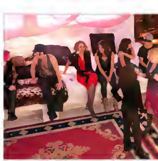
And many more continue to go through the process of filing for bankruptcy. "So many people have gone through it — and people like that middle-class types — that they now have a different idea of what it's like," Carballo said.

Sometime after the Berkeley couple has left, another filer goes through his interview with the trustee. It's one of dozens of interviews that morning, and when it's over, the filer reconvenes with his attorney and walks out into the elevator lobby.

"That's it? Now what?" he asks his attorney.

That's it, his attorney says. "You want more?" ●

Laura.Hautala@EastBayExpress.com



Polyamorists gathered recently at SupperClub in San Francisco to discuss the rigors of having multiple sex partners

Joseph Schell

Sex by Numbers

Polyamory has gone from being a fringe scene to a veritable subculture. But can having multiple partners ever be widely accepted?

By Rachel Swan

Jessica, John and Kate (not their real names) sat together at Cafe Van Kleef recently, looking more like three long-time friends than three people involved in a love triangle — or as they'd put it, a love polygonal. Jessica had an arm casually draped around John, who leaned against her contentedly. The two of them met on OKCupid about three years ago, started an email correspondence, and hooked up for the first time at a friend's Christmas party — John says they spent most of it making out in the bathroom. They started seeing each other "in a fling capacity," he says, and fell in love against their better interests. John clearly remembers the day it struck him. "We were outside a Virgin Megastore in New York," he recalled, "next to two guys who were laying asphalt. I suddenly turned to her and I was like, 'Hey, I love you.' And she started crying."

About a year into their relationship, Kate entered the picture. She and John had actually known each other for a long time, and John said they'd always had a lot of chemistry. Both were warm and loquacious, identified as "queer," and saw themselves as part of the Bay Area's sexual underground. They'd actually met at a drag show. One day, Kate showed up at a music event that John had produced in Oakland's Mosswood Park. (By day, he works as a freelance lighting designer for rock shows.) Kate marched straight up to Jessica. "Full disclosure," she said. "I'm only here to get in your boyfriend's pants."

Weirdly enough, it worked. It turns out Jessica is one of the few people in the world who would take kindly to someone trying to steal her man. Because she doesn't think of it as stealing, it's more like sharing. A good boyfriend shouldn't be squandered on one person, right? At this point, Kate and John have been sleeping together for a full year. They use condoms. John and Jessica are still "primary" partners. Jessica, in the meantime, started seeing three other guys. It's not about getting even, she says; it's about sharing the love. She and Kate are best friends. And Kate has a fiancé of her own.

Confused yet? Jessica explains it this way: "So here's a conventional relationship," she said. "You meet someone, you date, after six months, you use the 'L' word." She paused and glanced over at Kate, who nodded approvingly. "Then you wait for him to ask you to marry him. Then you have a baby."

That isn't what she ever wanted. In fact, since reading Dossie Easton's polyamory primer, *The Ethical Slut*, in college, Jessica decided that she wanted to impose a cooperative, communal model on her own romantic life, without being a total freak. Although her current relationship with John is her first real foray into polyamory, Jessica said it's something she always wanted. She's certainly not inured to jealousy — on one is, she argues — but she's found ways to sublimate it. And she feels that the returns are well worth the sacrifice, adding that she'll probably never go back to old one-on-one style partnership. "I like being a slut," she insisted.

And Jessica's not alone. Over the past decade, polyamory has gone from being a fringe trend to a bona fide scene to a relationship model that's widespread enough to almost be socially acceptable. The scene has its own canon, which includes texts like *The Ethical Slut* and Christopher Ryan's *Sex at Dawn* (co-authored with his partner Cacilda Jethá). Plus it's got celebrities like alt weekly sex columnist Dan Savage, who coined the word "monogamish" and turned open relationships into a cause célèbre. He's currently shooting a late-night advice show for MTV. Some would even argue that the proliferation of social networks and dating sites — namely, Facebook and OKCupid — has turned us into a more open culture. The Bay Area in particular, with its long history of free love, its vast network of Burning Man enthusiasts, and its overall progressive ethos, is a natural hotbed for the alternative sex scene. It's a place where avid polyamorists can bring just about anyone into their fold.

Sort of. It turns out that, no matter how successful they've been at negotiating relationships, many polyamorists still have one foot in the closet. And in a world where monogamy is not only well-entrenched but vital to the workings of a property-based society, their scene may always remain marginal.

That realization has caused many "ethical sluts" to treat open relationships not only as a lifestyle but as a social cause.

Christopher Ryan has spent most of the last ten years combating what he calls "the standard narrative" that man's nature is to always be concerned about paternity. He started writing *Sex at Dawn* about eleven years ago as a PhD dissertation. At that time, Ryan was studying psychology at Saybrook University and working at a San Francisco nonprofit called Women in Community Service. "It was all women, except for me and one other guy," Ryan said, "and they were all lesbian-feminist Berkeley types."

Ryan was in the midst of reading Robert Wright's *The Moral Animal*, which uses evolutionary psychology to figure out whether men are congenital cheaters. Ryan had a major hard-on for the book. He'd recap Wright's theories for anyone who would listen, including the women at his nonprofit — who mostly dismissed them. "They said, 'That sounds really Victorian and phallocentric,'" Ryan recalled. He didn't take their criticisms as insult. Rather, he decided to go back and explore some of Wright's original research.

And that led him to the bonobos. Ryan contends that if you want to challenge the standard narrative of human sexuality, you can't just start at the beginning of civilization — you have to go all the way back to our primate ancestors. He explained it thus to a crowd of roughly a dozen acolytes at San Francisco's Center for Sex and Culture: "If your dog shits on your bed and you want to know why, you're not going to study birds. You're going to look at wolves, and foxes and coyotes." Similarly, if your girlfriend sleeps around and you want to know why, take a look at the female bonobos at the San Diego Zoo. As Ryan's friend Carol Queen pointed out, you'll see a lot of parents at the zoo covering their children's eyes. Bonobos love to hump.

There's really no way to answer an essential question about human evolution without re-sorting to conjecture, as Ryan and his co-author (and wife) Jetha tried to have some humility about it. They also tried to incorporate data from as many disciplines as possible — primatology, archaeology, nutritional biology, psychology, contemporary sexuality, pornography, you name it. They drew some interesting conclusions, first and foremost, that monogamy really began with the advent of agriculture. That's when we became concerned about ownership and possessions. That's when men decided that the only way to uphold a property-based society was to control women's bodies. In Ryan's estimation, it didn't take that long — evolutionarily speaking — for us to invent the phrase "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife."

But there's more. Ryan and Jetha also discovered some interesting and oft-maligned facets of female sexuality that was borne out in bonobo research. Namely, that women are raving perverts, that they're way more "bisexual" than men, and that they make a lot more noise during sex. Even more importantly: We're all perverts. Or, as Ryan would put it, we're "promiscuous" beings — promiscuous not in the sense of prurience, but in the sense of wanting to mix, being fiercely egalitarian, and wanting to have sex with as many different people as possible.

We've been taught to think in terms of competition and scarcity, Ryan says, meaning that we're told if we don't ensnare one partner within a certain time frame, our chance at reproduction will run out. He contends that this line of thinking is culturally imposed, and that in reality we're not thinking about procreation every time we have sex — we're doing it for pleasure. "Think about the number of times you've had sex," Ryan said to the audience at Center for Sex and Culture. He paused, allowing us to mentally calculate. "Now divide that by the number of kids you have." A few people chortled, though some hid their faces uncomfortably. Point taken.

Ryan isn't particularly doctrinal — he purposefully left the pedagogical, thumb-sucking, "Where to go from here" chapter out of *Sex at Dawn*. But his book, which quickly landed on *The New York Times* bestseller list, has become a de facto Bible in the polyamory community. John and Jessica both invoke his theories when trying to define their relationship. "Monogamy automatically assumes all these rules," Jessica said. "That's why, when you desire someone besides your one life partner, it's called 'cheating.'"

John would venture even further, arguing that open relationships are actually a more natural state than marriage and the nuclear family. "Okay, like 10 percent of people in this society say they're gay, right? I think about the same amount of people are naturally born monogamous." He continued: "But from day one, as a society, we're immediately routed towards monogamy. This shit starts right when you get out of the womb, man. Wrap that colored blanket around them, put the mother and father on the birth certificate. Boom."

"FROM DAY ONE, AS A SOCIETY, WE'RE ROUTED TOWARDS MONOGAMY. THIS SHIT STARTS RIGHT WHEN YOU GET OUT OF THE WOMB. WRAP THAT COLORED BLANKET AROUND THEM, PUT THE MOTHER AND FATHER ON THE BIRTH CERTIFICATE. BOOM."

He's rankled about that. "The whole 'It takes a village' thing? It shouldn't be a foreign concept." John added that Ryan's book merely validated feelings he's had for years. "It helped me find words to express how I function." John will readily admit that his parents were monogamous, and that he grew up without any kind of progressive, open relationship model to use as a reference point. Nonetheless, he's says he's been poly his whole life.

One of the people who attended Ryan's lecture was Polly Whittaker, a slender freckled blond who is a veritable Johnny Appleseed of the local polyamory community. Whittaker is one of those rare people who can flaunt her sexual preferences without compunction, since she works in the alt-sex world full time. Born in the UK and raised in a fairly permissive family — her parents were both sex therapists, and her mother

Christopher Ryan's *Sex at Dawn* is a canonical work in the polyamory community. Joseph Schell

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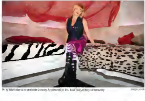
"turned a blind eye" to her father's multiple affairs — she started going to fetish clubs as a teenager, immersed herself in the "sex underground," and entered her first open relationship after immigrating to the US in 1999. "The first weekend I came was the Folsom Street Fair," she said. "It was amazing. I was like 'Yay, this is my town. I've arrived.'"

Some people only recognize Whittaker by the costumes she wears at sex parties, which involve a lot of pink wigs and corsets. In person, though, she's polite and down-to-business, and exudes a surprisingly small amount of sexual energy. In fact, she looks like a grown-up version of the Swiss Miss hot chocolate logo: cute, fair-skinned, and much younger in appearance than her 36 years. She says that by day she's focused on writing; her partner, Scott Levkoff, is a puppeteer.

The couple launched their organization, Mission Control, in January 2001 after leasing a second floor walk-up in the Mission. Whittaker already had her own fetish party, but she wanted to increase the clientele. "I was inviting some raver-Burner types as well," she said, indicating that the idea of mixing those subcultures was still a little outré at that time. "Those communities really hadn't crossed yet. It was like the Goths were the fetish people and the ravers were the ecstasy people. There was no crossover."

Whittaker took it upon herself to bring the disparate tribes together, if only for the sake of throwing better parties. The result, she said, was fantastic: "colorful, costumed, sex-positive, Burning Man oriented (but not Burning Man). We just created this space where people felt like they could explore."



Polly Whittaker is a veritable Johnny Appleseed in the local polyamory community. Joseph Schell

The club now hosts seven different play parties, in addition to a monthly art salon. John said it runs the gamut: fairy nights, lady's nights, heavier play nights, lighter play nights, trans nights, fetish nights, sex club-oriented nights. Most events cost $30-$35 and entail a mandatory dress code. Some require all participants to bring a buddy. "You know," he said, "they want to keep the riffraff out."

John explained that when sex parties aren't properly policed, they can attract a bad element — i.e., "dudes in sweatpants who like to jerk off while watching trannies fuck. I mean, not that it's bad to watch trannies fuck — that's hot," he said. "Sweat pants? Not so hot."

Mission Control's flagship party is called Kinky Salon, which is kind of an omnisexual catch-all. It's not polyamorous per se, but you have to be poly friendly to go, given all the exchanging of partners that happens there. According to people who go, it looks nondescript from the outside — just a grate and a doortender. But the inside is all razzle-dazzle: wood paneling, a smokers' porch, tapestries, a dance floor with a stripper pole and mirrored disco ball, bartenders who hold your drinks (Kinky Salon has a BYOB policy and no liquor license), baskets full of condoms and lube, a back room full of beds and boxsprings and futons, people walking around in various stages of undress. Every iteration of the party has a theme (e.g. "woodland creatures," "superheroes," or "San Franciscan").

John has a fairly sunny view of Kinky Salon, at least in terms of its ability to attract a wide and representative swath of the polyamory subculture. Yes, more than half of the folks who attend are white, college-educated people in their thirties, he said. But they constitute the scene's demographic majority. "It's definitely a have-your-life-together-but-are-still-having-tons-of-fun kind of crowd," he said, adding that in general the racial makeup pretty much mirrors that of San Francisco.

Jessica's read is a little more cynical. She's been to two Mission Control parties and says they definitely stand out in a sense that's become larger and more diffuse — in the last decade, so-called "pansexual" and "alternative adult" clubs have cropped up all over San Francisco, and many of them are a little less discriminating in terms of the crowds they draw. All the same, she finds the crowd to be pretty specific, not so much in an elitist way as in an [illegible] way. And generally, it's dominated by nerds. "You know: Burning Man people, Renn Faire people, people who are really costumed," she said. "They're older. They're not really people I'm interested in fucking."

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A place to relax at SupperClub

joseph schell

She continued: "There's this back room where you go to have sex, and there's always this weird pile of people going at it in the middle of the room. But it's way less creepy than it could be."

Ned Mayhem, a PhD student in the sciences and second-generation polyamorist (his father also has an open marriage) would agree with that assessment. He and his partner Maggie Mayhem have a porn website based around their "sex geek" personae. They even invented something called a PSIgasm, which uses sensory devices to measure the strength of orgasms. (They're trying to get money to develop it, but haven't been able to work within normal fund-raising apparati — Kickstarter snubbed them.) Mayhem said that a lot of the people he meets in the so-called "sexual underground" are nerds in other parts of their lives — grad students, engineers, costume-party types, bookworms, live-action role players. They tend to be open-minded and well-educated, but always a little to the left of what mainstream society would consider "sexy."

Perhaps that explains why polyamory has formed such a flourishing, albeit circumscribed subculture. It's a scene where square pegs and misfits can reinvent themselves as Lotharios, where a self-described "socially well-adjusted" person like Jessica feels like an outlier.

Certainly, not all polyamorists attend sex parties or engage in kink — many who subscribe to the "open relationship" philosophy still consider themselves fairly vanilla. But the fact that San Francisco has such a vast and well-networked sexual underground benefits them, too, since it makes for a more tolerant environment. It also shows that the alt-sex scene, and by extension, the polyamory scene, isn't just a countercultural flake.

At the end of the day, though, it remains marginal. And if you buy into Ryan's argument that an ownership-based society organizes itself around monogamous relationships, then polyamory may never really become mainstream. It's a fringe movement by its very definition, and some adherents would prefer that it stay that way.

In fact, there are two main obstacles facing the polyamory movement. One is that, like it or not, we're a morality-obsessed culture, and in many ways we're still a doctrinal culture. A 2009 Gallup poll showed that 92 percent of Americans think that having an extramarital affair is morally wrong. That's about twice as many as those who condemn gay and lesbian relationships, and three times as many as those who oppose the death penalty. Which is to say that as a culture, we're intractably wedded to the idea of a solid matrimonial bond. We're more amenable to the idea of legally killing someone than the idea of wrecking a marriage.

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Thus, open relationships have a long way to go before becoming socially acceptable, let alone part of the status quo. Bigots who still find the idea of gay marriage unsavory probably won't cotton to nonmonogamy anytime soon.

Most of the people interviewed for this article wanted to conceal their identities, either because they feared repercussions at work — Kate, for instance, is an elementary school teacher; Ned asked that the name of his university be redacted to avoid raising the attention of administrators — or because they hadn't "come out" to their families. Jessica said her mom mildly disapproves of open relationships and tends to dodge the subject when Jessica brings it up. A woman named Jess Young who grew up in Texas and moved to the Bay Area after college said her parents threw her out of the house when she was in high school for being a lesbian. "I think that polyamory would be beyond the scope of their understanding," she said.

The other problem is that humans are jealous creatures, whether or not we throw the concept of ownership into the equation. Asked if we can ever overcome jealousy, Dan Savage had a pretty straightforward answer: "No," he wrote in an email interview. "And I say that as someone who has been in a monogamish relationship for a dozen years. Jealousy is a control. I think a natural human emotion — just like the desire for variety and other partners."

And the truth is that polyamorous relationships are hard. Those who practice them say there's no set way of doing it. Leskoff and Whittaker are loose enough and trusting enough to let each other spend entire weekends with their respective lovers. Whittaker said she usually likes to meet the people her partner dates, particularly if it's more than just a casual romance, but she's not always interested in hearing all the details.

Jessica and John have a more hands-on approach, meaning they pretty much tell each other everything. Jessica confessed that she finds herself getting jealous in unexpected ways, and not always about sex. "I'll be like 'Have you made dinner with him? No fair!'" Ned describes his relationship with Maggie as "polyfuckerous" rather than polyamorous, and says that largely owes to time constraints: he's a full-time student, she has a day job, and neither of them has the energy for endless "processing."

Some polyamorists subscribe to the idea of "compersion," which is basically a way of being happy that your partner is happy, even if that means allowing your partner to see other people. Oft described as "the inverse of jealousy," it's defined both as an enlightened, empathic state and a tool to surmount the feelings of possessiveness and insecurity that normally crop up in romantic relationships. Some polyamory scholars argue that compersion can be learned. Easton discusses it at length in *The Ethical Slut*. Jessica says she's been able to implement it sometimes. "Realistically," she said, "nobody's immune to jealousy."

And then, well, there's the problem of some people being liars, no matter what situation you put them in — closed, open, whatever. People in monogamous relationships cheat, but so do people in polyamorous relationships. Some people "open up" relationships in order to sabotage rather than enhance them. Savage put it bluntly: "Some people convince their partners to open their relationships, and promise them that it's not because they're not attracted to them anymore, but they're really done and want out of the relationship, and 'openness' for them means 'I'm out there auditioning potential new partners and as soon as I find one I'm going to dump the person I'm with.'"

> "I THINK MONOGAMY HAS CERTAIN PRESSURES AND DISCONNECTS THAT COMPLICATE RELATIONSHIPS," DAN SAVAGE WROTE. "AND I THINK POLYAMORY DOES, TOO. YOU GET TO PICK YOUR POISON."

Kate agreed. "Nonmonogamous people can cheat," she said. "It's just about being a dishonest schmuck. If you do it right, it's supposed to be thoughtful. You're supposed to do a lot of checking in and talking things to death."

And granted, people in polyamorous relationships deal with their fair share of dishonest schmucks. "The first guy I dated in New York, I think he wanted to rescue me from John," Jessica said. "He was super emotionally intimate with me, listened to me talk about my relationship, sort of alluded to the fact that he wasn't really down with the program. After two months he disappeared." She sighed. "I feel like dudes think that because you already have a boyfriend, they don't have to actually break things off."

John's been jilted, too. "There was a girl I was dating for a month or two, the sex was really hot, and she was down with the fact that I had another partner," he said. "Then I went off to New York for a few weeks, and she basically started dating someone who wanted to be monogamous." So the girl just bounced, leaving John in the lurch. "It really hurts when someone starts dating you and then they have to stop because they're not actually poly." He explained that even though most people are theoretically born nonmonogamous, few people can actually practice nonmonogamy in a healthy, fair, fully communicative way. "We're so habituated to think of romance in terms of competition and scarcity that it becomes nearly impossible to break away from that model," John said. "One would think that his and Jessica's pool of potential partners is a lot bigger than that of the average person, but it's actually more limited."

In the end, it's hard to say which model is better given our social circumstances. "I think monogamy has certain pressures and disconnects that complicate relationships," Savage wrote. "And I think polyamory does too. You get to pick your poison."

It's possible to make a serious mess of a polyamorous relationship, be an unthinking, uncaring jerk, and alienate the people around you. Then again, it's also possible to create the kind of romance that John and Jessica apparently have, in which everything seems beautiful and clean. ◆

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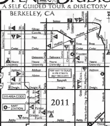

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Trivia for Tunesters

Bay Area Girls Rock Camp's music-trivia night premieres at Actual Cafe.

Sari Flowers said that when she was a kid, her dad's record room was something of a legend among her friends. The small sleeve of her Sebastopol home was lined from floor to ceiling with records, and consequently her house was regularly filled with the eclectic sounds of her parents' collection. "Growing up it was country music, punk music, rap music — it didn't matter what kind of music," she said. Her dad — an avid music lover and amateur rock photographer who grew up in Detroit with members of the iconic rock band MC5 — collected it all, and could even recite the storied histories behind much of the music.

Bay Area Girls Rock Camp

That's how Flowers, a board member for the nonprofit Bay Area Girls Rock Camp and a longtime musician, said she developed her own vast appreciation for the medium. It's also how she came to know the answers to obscure music-trivia prompts such as, "Name the first song ever referred to in print as rock 'n' roll." (The answer: "Caldonia," a 1945 jump blues song by Louis Jordan — though it was the Erskine Hawkins version released later that same year that garnered the designation.)

So when Flowers and other camp organizers were brainstorming strategies to drum up money and volunteers for their music program, they found such questions to be the answer — that is, they designed a monthly, all-ages music-trivia night where music buffs of all ages could congregate, rattle off their musical know-how about everything from 1970s punk to contemporary pop, and show a little love for the all-girls music camp and after-school program via donations collected at the door. While Bay Area Girls Rock Camp already hosts various fundraising shows throughout the year, Flowers foresees team-based trivia nights being more inclusive than concerts, where music tends to drown out conversations and the focus is generally on the bands. "I guess I was trying to think of a way to have a community event that people could really engage in," Flowers said. And what's more, "There aren't a lot of music-trivia nights around."

Nor are there an abundance of quiz nights held at spaces other than bars. And so the next question for Flowers and fellow organizer and camp board member Dana Joe became where to hold a trivia event that could accommodate an all-ages crowd: a venue that was kid-friendly but still offered libations for the older faction. Flowers guessed that most adults probably wouldn't go for a competitive trivia session sans alcohol. At the same time, holding a 21-and-up event in the name of a youth-centered program just seemed wrong. So the Actual Cafe (6334 San Pablo Ave., Oakland), a comfy, casual cafe that counts beer and wine among its many menu items, seemed like an ideal location.

And that's where Bay Area Girls Rock Camp's music-trivia night premieres on Friday, December 2, when music geeks of every ilk can converge in teams of three to six to test their knowledge of song lyrics, album covers, and other musical riddles for a chance to win vinyl and other prizes. Sistas in the Pit bassist Katy Brown hosts the inaugural event, in which 10 percent of the cafe's earnings from the evening will go to support the camp. Come with a team or form one on the spot. 6 p.m., donations accepted. 510-267-1808 or BayAreaGirlsRockCamp.org

—Cassie Harwood

ATTRACTIONS

Find the Ring in a Snowball Dig through a snowball to find the one with a 1/4-carat diamond ring inside, in conjunction with Snow Day in the Gourmet Ghetto. Sun., Dec. 4, 1-4 p.m., free. [illegible] M. Lowe and Co., 1509 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley, 510-450-0812, [illegible]

Temescal Art Collective Saturday Bazaar With live art-making, music, food and jewelry vendors, and more. Saturdays, 12-6 p.m., free. 510-593-0733, FirehouseArtCollective.blogspot.com. Firehouse Art Collective, 2132 Alcatraz St., Berkeley.

From Fur to Felt Visit sheep, learn about felt and farm life, and make your own felted pouch. For ages 10 and up. RSVP required. Sun., Dec. 4, 2 p.m.-4 p.m., $10-$12. Tilden Park Environmental Education Center, north end of Central Park Drive, Berkeley, EBParks.org.

Jack London Square Lights Up for the Holidays With a holiday tree lighting, live music, and a preview of parade floats and costumes to be featured in the Oakland Children's Holiday Parade the following day. At the foot of Broadway. Fri., Dec. 2, 5-7 p.m., free. Jack London Square, 98 Broadway, [illegible]

OMCA Film Screening: World AIDS Day With screenings throughout the day of Jim Hodgins, Carlos Gutierrez-da Cruz, and Ondine Berg's documentary *Unfilled*, about HIV/AIDS. Thu., Dec. 1, 11 a.m.-4 p.m., museum admission. Oakland Museum of California, 1000 Oak St., Oakland, 510-318-8400, MuseumCA.org.

Piedmont Avenue Tree Lighting Ceremony and Holiday Stroll The Piedmont Avenue Merchants Association presents the third annual ceremony and stroll with caroling, live performances by local musicians, a visit from Santa Claus, and holiday promotions at participating Piedmont Avenue businesses. Sat., Dec. 3, 5 p.m., free. PiedmontAvenue.org. Key Route Plaza, 410 St. and Piedmont Ave., Oakland.

Temescal Holiday Labyrinth Walk through a labyrinth designed by local artists. With food, crafts, live music, and Santa Claus. At the corner of 49th Street and Telegraph Avenue, Oakland. If it rains, event will be moved to Dec. [illegible] Sun., Dec. 4, 12-5 p.m., free. TemescalDistrict.org.

Working with Prism Craft Watch a spinning wheel turn carded wool into yarn and make a felted holiday ornament using a drop spindle. Sat., Dec. 3, 1:30-2:30 p.m., free. Tilden Park Environmental Education Center, north end of Central Park Drive, Berkeley, EBParks.org.

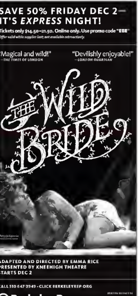
ZooLights Import Lighting presents a light show in which giant toy soldiers, lollipops, gingerbread men, and other characters dance among thousands of LED lights. Wed., 2 Jan. 1, 5:30-9 p.m., $4.50-$7.50. Oakland Zoo, 9777 Golf Links Rd., Oakland, 510-632-9525, OaklandZoo.org.

FAIRS, FESTIVALS & FIESTAS

Holiday Crafts Fair With a variety of locally made handcrafted gifts for sale. A benefit for the Ecology Center. Starting Dec. 3, Saturdays, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Continues through Dec. 17, free. Saturday Berkeley Farmers Market, Allston St. between Milvia St. and Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Berkeley, 510-548-3333, EcologyCenter.org.

A Holiday Tannenbaum With holiday teas, carriage rides, breakfast with Santa, sing-alongs, live entertainment, and more. For tickets: 925-686-9358 or [illegible] com/dunsmuir. Starting Dec. 3, Saturdays, Sundays, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Tannenbaum through Dec. 18, varies by time and event. Dunsmuir-Hellman Historic Estate, 2960 Peralta Oaks Ct., Oakland, 510-615-5555, Dunsmuir-Hellman.com.

HEALTH & WELLNESS



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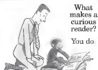
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PICKS

Grace, Beauty, Legs, Sex, and Condoms

Despite the relative decline or stabilization of HIV infections in most parts of the world, tens of millions of people still live with the virus worldwide, according to a UNAIDS report. This makes World AIDS Day a significant time of recognition for those affected by the virus. Locally, Bench and Bar (510 17th St., Oakland) shows its support for the occasion on Thursday, Dec. 1, with a free evening of appetizers, drag performances, and raffles — plus free HIV testing courtesy of the Berkeley Free Clinic, and other health-related information provided by East Bay organizations. 8-11 p.m., free. 415-554-9058 or SFIs-Ready.org. — *Cassie Harwood*

Zorro by Night.
Melissa Barnes

Zorro by Night

Zorro, the masked outlaw featured in many a book and film, left his mark in the form of the jagged "Z" he slashed across walls and other surfaces. You can leave a mark of your own by attending Zorro by Night, a Zorro-themed fundraiser for Peralta Hacienda Historical Park (2465 34th Ave., Oakland), benefiting everything from the park's preservation to its community gardening and outreach programs. The soirée on Thursday, Dec. 1, features flamenco performances, screenings of Zorro films projected inside the candlelit Peralta House, and an abundance of food offerings from Lupita's Pupuseria, The Chamberboard Collective, Saaga Sausages, and many more. 6-9 p.m. $50 and up. 510-532-9142 or PeraltaHacienda.org. — *CJ*

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Cal Performances

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Daniel Taylor, *countertenor*
Thomas Cooley, *tenor*
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The Expert Guide to the G-Spot and Female Ejaculation [illegible] Oakland, 510-[illegible].

Yoga and Hoop Dance for the Body and Mind [illegible] The Vida, 2560 Telegraph Ave., Berkeley, 510-[illegible].

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[illegible] Casa de Cultura, 1901 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley

GRAFFITY Arts & Crafts Faire [illegible] Julie's Coffee & Tea Garden, 1223 Park St., Alameda, [illegible]

Eastside Holiday Art and Book Sale Sat., Dec. 3, [illegible] Eastside Cultural Center, 2277 International Blvd., Oakland, [illegible] EastsideArtsAlliance.com.

Holiday Pop Up Art Studio [illegible] Berkeley [illegible]

Holiday Pop Up! at Jack London Square [illegible]

Oakland Under $100 [illegible]

Open Studio Art Room [illegible] Berkeley, [illegible]

Palestinian Crafts Bazaar [illegible]

Pre-Holiday Craft Sale [illegible]

LGBT

Grace, Beauty, Legs, Sex, and Condoms In recognition of World AIDS Day, a free evening of drag performances, raffles, [illegible] Thu., Dec. 1, 8-11 p.m., free. 415-554-9058, SFIsReady.org. Bench and Bar, 510 17th St., Oakland, 510-444-2266, BenchandBar.com.

RELIGION & SPIRITUALITY

Born This Way: A Jewish Perspective [illegible] Sun., Dec. 4 [illegible] Oakland, 510-[illegible] OaklandShul.org.

SALES, PROMOTIONS, & FUNDRAISERS

Alabe Le Roux Open Studio and Holiday Sale With handcrafted, functional glassware, paintings, and photography by local artists. [illegible] Oakland, [illegible]

Berkeley Artisans Holiday Open Studios With more than 100 local artists and craftspeople [illegible] Saturdays, Sundays, 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Continues through Dec. 18, free.

Oakland: Build A Warm Holiday Fundraiser for [illegible] An 11th anniversary celebration of [illegible]

[illegible] Toys for Tats [illegible] Sun., Dec. 4, 11 a.m. [illegible]

SOCIAL EVENTS

Bay Area Girls Rock Camp Benefit Music Trivia Night [illegible] Fri., Dec. 2, 8-10 p.m., free, donations accepted. [illegible] Actual Cafe, 6334 San Pablo Ave., Oakland, 510-[illegible], ActualCafe.com.

SF Bayfront Boogie [illegible] Sundays, 7:30-11 p.m., [illegible] Studio, 2525 Eighth St., Berkeley, 510-[illegible]

Locking and Wheeling Wonderland [illegible] Oakland, [illegible]

SPORTS & OUTDOORS-PARTICIPATORY

Square Unscented [illegible] San Leandro Bay. [illegible] Sun., Dec. 4, [illegible] Regional Shoreline, [illegible] Oakland, 510-[illegible]

SPORTS-SPECTATOR

Green NFL Sundays In addition to [illegible] Golden Gate Fields, [illegible] Berkeley, 510-559-7300, GoldenGateFields.com.

Lighted Yacht Parade The 35th annual event features lighted and luminous decorated boats on display along the Oakland Estuary. Sat., Dec. 3, 5:30 p.m., [illegible] Jack London Square, 99 Broadway, Oakland.

MUSEUMS & GALLERIES

Kyle Milligan's "Galactoblast I"

And Now for Something Completely Different

Disparate approaches for desperate times

In the classic Powell/Pressburger film *I Know Where I'm Going* an overly serious young Englishwoman remarks about an Irish local, "Little odd, isn't he?" "Who isn't?" replies her companion, an impoverished laird familiar with highfalutin London ways. Kyle Milligan's sculptures in his provocatively entitled solo show *Yeast Piss & Poppy Sap* display a similar insouciant eccentricity, combined with a mastery of traditional sculptural techniques. The resulting works are, in the press release's words, "whimsical, physical, intimate, and heavy," combining "the mashing together of unexpected shapes ... the humorous characterization of body parts ... [and] names plucked from medical manuals," which Milligan, who studied and practiced traditional Chinese medicine, finds funny.

"Steatopygia," or fat buttocks, and "Rosacea," named after a skin rash, feature bouquets of fleshy floral or coral entities mounted atop columnar or table-legged stands (as does the non-medically entitled "Orange Pop"). "Galactoblast II," a faux-marble trio of mushrooms ensnared by strings or veins, is based on the milk glands of the human breast. Other pieces have more conventional but equally eccentric titles, e.g., "Perverted," "Never Rename a Piece," "This Is Not a Love Song," and "What About My Dignity, Dammit!" Milligan: "These pieces are songs uninspired by lyrics you have to figure out. Their names are fun band names. People have been beat up by art. I don't feel you need to have an art degree to look at art, any more than you need a music degree to listen to the Beatles." Check out Milligan's studio behind the gallery, where "Schistosoma in Copula" and "Borborygmus," among others, await. *Yeast Piss & Poppy Sap* runs through December 17 at Studio Quercus (385 26th St., Oakland). 510-452-4670 or StudioQuercus.com.

Cashing Out, a group show of 22 artists or artist teams, too many to list in full here, explores the Great Recession through a variety of approaches. These include the straightforward photographic portraits of the homeless/underhoused by Stephen Chalmers, works that hark back to the WPA documentary work of Dorothea Lange and others (and are as timely as Occupy Oakland), and satirical or conceptual pieces on money (by Lauren DiCioccio, Dan Tague), housing (Geraldine Lenore, Zach Moser), shopping (Art for a Democratic Society, Banner Media Corp., Kathryn Clark, Torreya Cummings, Kelly Lynn Jones), and, of course, the military-petroleum complex (Walter Robinson). New paradigm, buddy? *Cashing Out* runs through December 3 at Kala Gallery (2990 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley). 510-841-7000 or Kala.org.

— *DeWitt Cheng*

ART GALLERIES

Actual Cafe. Do Not Eat (and it's not just snack) Food-themed group art show featuring work by Katie Lovecraft, Aimee Alexander, Kayla Kelly and many others. 80 percent of all items shown priced below $50. Through Dec. 8. 6334 San Pablo Ave., Oakland. 510-653-8300, ActualCafe.com.

Albany Community Center Arts Foyer Gallery. Black White and (Ultra) Red All Over With infrared landscape images from the East Bay shoreline and beyond, by Jim Colton. Through Jan. 2, 2012. 1249 Marin Ave., Albany. 510-524-9283, AlbanyCA.org/index.asp?page=581.

Berkeley Fellowship of Unitarian Universalists. En las Manos de las Mujeres With Mexican folk art and crafts on display and for sale, and featuring a video presentation of the award-winning Purepecha craftswomen of Michoacán. Sat., Dec. 3, 4-8 p.m. [illegible] 1924 Cedar St., Berkeley. 510-841-4824, BFUU.org.

Berkeley Public Library, Central. Man vs. Nature: Quiet Images from the Frontline An exhibition of color prints by Oakland photographer and life coach Nancy Brantano on display in the library's Central Catalog Lobby. Through Dec. 18. 2090 Kittredge St., Berkeley. 510-981-6100, BerkeleyPublicLibrary.org.

Frank Bette Center for the Arts. Seeker A group art exhibition featuring various artists' interpretations of seekers. Through Dec. 23. 1601 Paru St., Alameda. 510-523-6957, FrankBetteCenter.org.

The Compound Gallery & Studios. Be-Charmers With multi-paneled mixed-media paintings by Katherine Shanegold. Through Dec. 4. 1167 65th St., Oakland. 510-655-9019, TheCompoundGallery.com.

[illegible] Central Gallery. First Friday Divine Featuring work by Black Bottom co-curators [illegible] and [illegible] Brandon. First Friday of every month, 6 p.m. 1030 Pine St., Oakland. 510-451-4261.

David Roth's Glass Sculpture Studio and Annex. 87th Annual Open Studios With glass and plasma sculpture, neon art, photography, and paintings on display at David Roth's studio. Plus paintings, ceramics, collage and photography on display down the street at The Masonic Factory (1250 58th Ave., Oakland). Enjoy food and refreshments. Dec. 3-4, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. [illegible] 57th Ave., Oakland. 510-533-8528.

Doug Adams Gallery. Gendered Images: The Feminine Divine With work by Michael Coe, Anne Benson, Shalom Flemmers, Nancy Victoria Davis, and more. Through Dec. 16. 2465 Le Conte Ave., Berkeley. 510-849-8935, [illegible]

Expressions Gallery. Reclaimed and Pets We Cherish Sale of artwork from the show benefits the East Bay SPCA. Through Dec. 2. 2035 Ashby Ave., Berkeley. 510-644-4930, ExpressionsGallery.org.

G2 | Gallery. [illegible] A collection of photographs taken by participants in Gallery Oakland, San Francisco, Boulder and Los Angeles. Through Dec. 17. 2815 Magnolia St., Oakland. 510-472-8177, G2Gallery.com.

Important Projects. McKeever Brennan New work by the artist on display in Gallery 1. Through Dec. 2. 415-812-1758. **Body by Body** Wild work on display in Gallery 2 by San Francisco-based artists Monica Socio and CSS. Through Dec. 2. 415-812-158, 5432 Royal Ave., Oakland. ImportantProjects.net.

Johansson Projects. Circlesaints Featuring retrospective plant-themed works by Yvette Komal and Michael Meyers. Through Dec. 10. 2300 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. 510-444-9140, JohanssonProjects.com.

John F. Kennedy University Arts and Consciousness Gallery. Moments from [illegible] With fiber art, installation, photography, painting, and sculpture exploring the [illegible] process, by Jennifer Jenta. Through Dec. 16. [illegible] 2956 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley. 510-649-0499, JFKU.edu/Gallery.

Kala Art Institute Gallery. New Work from [illegible] Kala staff members Yuko Ozeki and Mayumi Hamanaka curate this art show with new work by Pamela Barlow, Harry Clewans, Holly Ferris, [illegible], Mitzi McClain, Edward Roark, Paula Shimabayashi, [illegible], and Richard Seegers. Through Dec. 3. 2990 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley.

Kala Gallery and Art Institute. Cashing

$7 FRIDAY DEC 2 @ BAM/PFA

OTHERWORLD (MACHINE)

DOORS 5 PM ✱ PERFORMANCE 7:30 PM
✱ PROGRAMMED BY KAMAU PATTON
✱ MIXED-MEDIA PERFORMANCE ✱
MASH-UP OF LIVE AND VIRTUAL DANCE

GALLERIES OPEN UNTIL 9 PM
SUR WORKS ✱ SILKE OTTO-KNAPP ✱ RICHARD MISRACH

FRIDAY NIGHT FILM @ PFA THEATER
$9.50, ADD'L FEATURE $4; FREE ADMISSION TO L@TE WITH SAME-FRIDAY PFA TICKET

Afterimage. The Films of Nicholás Pereda
NICHOLÁS PEREDA IN PERSON!

TOGETHER
7 PM (PEREDA, 2009; 73 MINS)
INTRODUCTION: ROBERT KOEHLER

PERPETUUM MOBILE
8:45 PM (PEREDA, 2010; 89 MINS)

GET MORE bampfa.berkeley.edu/late ✱ facebook.com/bampfa
BAM/PFA: 2626 BANCROFT WAY ✱ PFA THEATER: 2575 BANCROFT WAY

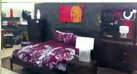
COMING
DECEMBER 9: NEGATIVWOBBLYLAND & BRYAN BOYCE
L@TE is made possible in part by the continued support of the BAM/PFA trustees.

Media Sponsor:
EAST BAY EXPRESS

L@TE
FRIDAY NIGHTS @
BAM/PFA

sitcom
FURNITURE OUTLET

Sitcom Outlet kicks off its week long December Clearance Sale this week!



KNOCK 30% OFF ALL PIECES IN OUR OUTLET!

Also featuring local vendors selling paintings, art and accessories rounding out the shopping experience
Have some fun today!!

839 High Street Oakland www.sitcomfurnitureoutlet.com
M-F 10-6pm Sat 10-5pm Sun 10-4pm

PICKS

Monet Clark, California Girl

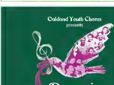
This retrospective solo show of performance/video artist Monet Clark begins with a 1990 video, *Convulsive Stripper*, showing the young SFAI grad doing a striptease that turns into an epileptic fit (whether it is simulated or real is unclear) that may strike the average insensitive male gaze as a more erotic transport. Tragically real, however, was Clark's long struggle with Environmental Illness, an autoimmune reaction to materials commonly used in American homes, which led to a shocking degree of isolation. Clark documented her travails in performances for video and still camera, notably "12 Frames of Isolation (1996-7), no doubt a darker version of *Six Degrees of Separation*. Returned to health, Clark created a *Look Book* (2011) series of short videos combining fashion-shoot [illegible] and fighting with spiritual/religious symbols and [illegible] [illegible] involve reality. *Monet Clark: California Girl* runs through Dec. 17 at Krowswork Gallery (480 23rd St., Oakland). 510-229-7035 or KrowsWork.com — *DeWitt Cheng*

Pick Your Poison

The show's title may suggest happy hour conviviality, but Gregory Roberts is serious. The forms of his wall-hung sculptures derive from the bridge plugs used in hydraulic fracturing, fracking, a controversial gas/oil mining practice that can cause fish kills, soil burns, and pollution of air and water. The artist sees the rounded cylindrical forms also as pharmaceutical capsules and phallic totems or lingams, equating machismo and intoxication (in both senses) — as hubris meds, take as needed. Ironically, the crackle pattern on the pieces is produced by dunking, i.e., opening the kiln suddenly as the process replicates industrial fracking on a smaller scale. These four-se- chalic vessels, totems, or bombs, bereft of handles and bases, yet decorated with photo decals of contemporary Anglo-Saxon life, could be time capsules from the Late Petroleum Age. *Pick Your Poison* runs through Nov. 28 at Rousse Ceramic Gallery (473 25th St., Oakland). 510-595-3174 or RousseCeramicGallery.com — *D.C.*

Still from Monet Clark's video "Reptilian."

Oakland Youth Chorus
presents



Peace-ing
It Together
Peace, Love & Music

Saturday • December 10, 2011 • 6 pm
First Presbyterian Church of Oakland
2619 Broadway at 27th St.
Tickets & Info: oaklandyouthchorus.org

[illegible]: The loan exhibition to Kala's about about systems, [illegible] artists' interpretations to [illegible] financial systems. [illegible] Through Dec. 3. 1060 Heinz Ave. [illegible] 510-549-2977. Kala.org.

Krowswork: Monet Clark: California Girl & Retrospective [illegible]: Clark's solo and [illegible] exhibition [illegible] two decades of performance and video work, often filmed on real sets and during [illegible] in the early 1990s. Through Dec. 17. 480 23rd St., Oakland.

La Peña Cultural Center: Michele Alaso: With photographs highlighting contemporary African-American pride and liberation. On display in the theater. Dec. 3-28. **Johnathan "J-Face" Williams:** With [illegible] paintings influenced by everything from animals to astrology, on display in the lounge. Through Dec. 31. 3105 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. 510-849-2568. LaPena.org.

[illegible] 123: Nature Studies: Featuring large-scale color photographs of the [illegible] world by [illegible] local artists Susan Felter and Mara Pruett. Through Jan. 4, 2012. 2049 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley. 510-847-5270. [illegible]123Gallery.com.

[illegible] Gallery: Holiday Show of [illegible]: Featuring small drawings, collages, prints, paintings, and sculptures by Wayne Armstrong, Mike Lightfoot, Elaine Maute, Una [illegible], and Don Weber. Dec. 2-27. 4[illegible] 25th St., Oakland. 510-282-2335. [illegible]Gallery.com.

MOCHA: [illegible] Museum of Children's Art: Re-Create: With works created from discarded materials by Oakland students. Through Dec. 30. OaklandRecycles.com. 538 9th St., Oakland. 510-465-8770. MOCHA.org.

Monaghans on the Hill: Memories of My Words After and Fire: With photography following the Berkeley-Oakland Hills fire by Katrina Fraser. Through Dec. 31. 2820 Mountain Blvd., Oakland. 510-482-2500. MonaghansOnTheHill.com.

Oakland Free Library [illegible] Town Gallery: Research for [illegible]: An [illegible] piece that visitors can contribute to and transform by selecting pre-written ballot [illegible], recording [illegible], and returning them to [illegible] by Oakland visitors. The artist will mix the recordings and play them in the gallery to create random [illegible]. Through Dec. 31. 650 20th St., Oakland. 510-238-3134.

Oakland School for the Arts: Ghost Box. Swarm: 4th Alameda Library and Visual Arts Honor Walls Show: With hundreds of new works on display and for sale by the school's visual art students. Proceeds benefit the artists and the visual art program. Fri., Dec. 2, 6-8 p.m.; Sat., Dec. 3, 2-7 p.m. 1720 San Pablo Ave. [illegible] 510-873-8800. OakArts.org/index.php/arts/visualarts.

[illegible] Tattoo: Art of the Anti-Christmas: First Friday opening for the shop's "Un-boring Christmas" show, [illegible] takes a jab at the commercialism of the holiday season. Fri., Dec. 2, 7 p.m.-midnight. 911 Washington St., Oakland. 510-466-4604.

[illegible] Graphics' Grand Opening Art Show: With eclectic paintings and prints by Monika [illegible], Alexis Osborn, Ace Morgan, Brian [illegible], John [illegible], and Dan [illegible]. Through Dec. 2. 4770 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. 510-456-6808. [illegible].

More Listings Online
Get info about dozens more SF art events at EastBayExpress.com or m.EastBayExpress.com

Royal NoneSuch Gallery: Handy [illegible] to Be Without: With paintings by [illegible], documenting things we [illegible] from the artist's studio and anonymous paintings left by other artists during residencies. Through Dec. 4. 4321 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. 415-[illegible]. RoyalNonesuchGallery.com.

San Pablo Art Gallery: Three's Company: Featuring paintings, prints, and mixed-media works by M. Louise Stanley, Lewis Stein, and [illegible] Wilson. Through Dec. 18. 13831 San Pablo Ave., San Pablo.

[illegible] Gallery: Sea and Sky: With jewelry by April Higashi and paintings by [illegible] Maynard. Through Dec. 5. 1422 5th St., Berkeley. 510-528-7258. [illegible].

SLATE Contemporary: Rarely Three: [illegible]: A multi-media exhibition [illegible] work by Caroline [illegible], [illegible] Mandl, Rachel Dawson, Paula [illegible], and Jonah Burlingame. Through Dec. 17. 473 25th St., Oakland. 510-[illegible]. SlateArtAndDesign.com.

Smokey's Tangle: Amorphous [illegible]: With video apparitions fading from a [illegible] universe into a [illegible]. Through Dec. 2-17. 4230 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. SmokeysTangle.com.

Stage Left Culture: An Evening of Art: With art by [illegible] M. Chavez, plus wine tasting and [illegible] by the artist. Sat., Dec. 3, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. [illegible]. 2330 [illegible] St., Oakland. 510-434-9300. StageLeftCulture.com.

Studio Quercus: [illegible] & Poppy Sap: With sculpture by Kyle Milligan. Through Dec. 17. 385 29th St., Oakland. 510-452-4477. StudioQuercus.com.

Susan Brooks Studio: Susan Brooks: With handwrought jewelry and works on paper, on display during the Berkeley Artisans Holiday Open Studios. Saturdays-Sundays. Continues through Dec. 18. 2547 Eighth St., Studio 24 A, Berkeley.

Swarm Studios + Gallery: Mystical Menagerie: Work by Laura Ball and Jillian Ludwig. Through Dec. 23. Free. **Radical Geographer: Portrait of my Father:** An installation-based portrait by Michele Pred on display in the gallery's project space. Through Dec. 23. 560 2nd St., Oakland. 510-839-2787. SwarmGallery.com.

Thousand Oaks Art Gallery: Interior & Visual Monotypes & Paintings: Works by Ruth A. Block. Through Jan. 7. 888 Colusa Ave., Berkeley. 510-528-3601. ThousandOaksArtCompany.com.

Tilden Park Environmental Education Center: Interior Science Illustration: With [illegible] of Flora and Fauna by members of the local Guild of Natural Science Illustrators. Dec. 1-[illegible]. **Interior Oakland Environmental School:** With works by members to the local Guild of Natural Science Illustrators, featuring the flora and fauna of the East Bay Regional Parks and other natural environments. Through Dec. 31. north end of Central Park Drive, Berkeley. EBParks.org.

[illegible] Contemporary: Oakland Opening: A solo exhibition by Lena Wolff, with works on paper evoking the term "Country." Through Dec. 17. **[illegible]:** An [illegible] group show featuring participants from the [illegible] Art Center's Paper Quilt Project. Through Dec. 17. [illegible] Colusa Ave., Berkeley. 510-527-1254. [illegible].com.

Vessel Gallery: God is Three: With painting by [illegible], bronze sculpture by Luke Hemingway, and jewelry by [illegible]. Through Dec. 31. 471 25th St., Oakland.

[illegible] Gallery: THUNDERDOME: With paintings by Ole Kaufmann, whose works explore the [illegible] of [illegible] archetypes into a graphic language of impressionist shells and [illegible]-like illustration. Through Dec. 18. OleKaufmann.com. [illegible] Ave., Oakland. 510-[illegible]. [illegible].

[illegible] Interior Design Studio: Tell-Tale: With photographs and objects by Bay Area artists [illegible], [illegible], and Laura Plageman. Sat., Dec. 3, 2-4 p.m. 481 25th St., Oakland. 510-460-0373. [illegible].com. ■

First Friday

ART OPENINGS & EVENTS

See the Art Gallery listings in the *Express* for more information on East Bay art showings

Spend an evening supporting local arts!

Some venues offering art openings and/or special events on First Friday December 2nd.

ALAMEDA

Frank Bette Center
1601 Paru St.

ALBANY

Gathering Tribes
1412 Solano Ave

BERKELEY

Berkeley Art Museum
2626 Bancroft Way

Berkeley Potters Guild
731 Jones St

Kala Gallery
2990 San Pablo Ave

Urbanity
1887 Solano Ave.

OAKLAND

21 Grand
416 25th St

4707 Gallery
4707 Telegraph

57th Street Gallery
5701 Telegraph Ave

Anna Edwards Gallery
237 East 14th St.

Actual Café
6334 San Pablo Ave

Bay Area Visual Arts Network
455 17th St

Bellevue Club
525 Bellevue Ave

Bites off Broadway
365 45th Street

Book Zoo
14 Glen Ave

Café Van Kleef
1621 Telegraph Ave.

Clausen House
650 Grand Ave

Collaborate Photography Studio and Art Gallery
431 13th St

The Compound Gallery
1167 65th St.

Creative Growth
355 24th St.

The Crucible's Cathedral Gallery
1615 Broadway

Five Ten Studio
831 Broadway Ave

Forthrite Gallery
5857 San Pablo Ave

Front Gallery
35 Grand Ave

Gamma Space
6608 San Pablo Ave.

Hatch
492 23rd St.

Joyce Gordon Gallery
406 14th St.

Krowswork Gallery
480 23rd St

Kuhl Frames + Art
412 22nd St

The Layover
1517 Franklin St.

Levende East
827 Washington St.

Lireille
3980 Piedmont Ave

LoBot Gallery
1800 Campbell St

Lukas Taproom & Lounge
2221 Broadway

Macarthur Barthur
4030 MLK Way

Paradiso Lounge
2272 Telegraph Ave.

ProArts
150 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza

Pro Arts @ Latham Square
1611 Telegraph Ave

RAW Gallery
1951 Telegraph Ave

Red Door Gallery
416 26th St.

Rock Paper Scissors Collective
2278 Telegraph Ave

Rooz Café
1918 Park Blvd

Royal Nonesuch Gallery
4231 Telegraph

Rowan Morrison
330 40th St.

Smokey's Tangle
4709 Telegraph Ave

Somar Bar and Lounge
1727 Telegraph Ave.

Spice Monkey Café and Restaurant
1828 Webster St

Sticks + Stones
815 Broadway

Studio One Art Center
385 45th St.

Swarm Studios & Gallery
560 2nd St

The Swee(t)Art Drawing Gallery
6602 San Pablo Ave

Tech Liminal
268 14th St.

Temescal Arts Center
511 48th St.

Thelma Harris Art Gallery
5940 College Ave.

OAKLAND ART MURMUR

Buzz Gallery
2318 Telegraph Ave.

Chandra Cerrito Gallery
25 Grand Ave

Classic Cars West
411 26th St.

Era Art Bar
19 Grand Avenue

Farley's East
33 Grand Avenue

FM Gallery
483 25th St.

Great Wall of Oakland
Back wall on Grand Ave between Broadway and Valley

Johansson Projects
2300 Telegraph Ave

Manna Gallery
473 25th Street, Suite 6

Mercury 20
475 25th St

The Moon
447 25th St.

Oakopolis
447 25th St

Photo
473 25th Street

Rescue Ceramic Gallery
473 25th Street, Suite 5

SLATE Contemporary
473 25th Street

Studio Quercus
385 26th St.

Vessel Gallery
471 25th St

Warehouse 416
416 26th St.

SAN LEANDRO

UrbanSpace Gallery
811 Washington St.

If you are an East Bay venue offering a First Friday evening art event, please email your information to Promotions@EastBayExpress.com to be included in the January directory

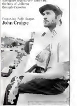
EAST BAY EXPRESS

BECK'S

A Night with Fine Folks

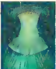
A benefit concert for Projeto Kirimurê
a program dedicated to enriching
the lives of children
through Capoeira

Featuring Folk Singer
John Craigie



Sat. Dec 10, 2011 • Doors open at 8p.m.
Casa de Cultura
1901 San Pablo Ave. Berkeley CA
For more info & online ticket sales, go to
www.capoeiraarts.com/johncraigieshow
Pre-sale tickets: $15 [illegible] after 8 $20

Mythos Fine Art & Artifacts Presents



Remembrance of Things Past
December 2 2011 January 1 2012
Opening Reception: December 2, 5:30-9 pm
[illegible]
Mythos Fine Art & Artifacts
[illegible]

Brice Frillici
New Art Works Show:
ILOVEIT
Sunday, December 4th
7pm-midnight

Rooney's Lodge 3424 • 19th St • San Francisco

San Francisco Artist Brice Frillici is a true Renaissance Man. When he wasn't busy releasing 7 full length solo albums this year (**bricefrillici.com/albums.html**) he filled his time drawing, painting, creating sculptures, woodworking, building web sites, bartending, home-brewing & hanging out with friends in the bar he built in a bedroom of his Mission District Victorian house, also known as Rooney's Lodge. Think Francis Bacon and the Colony Room Club (**rooneyslodge.com**). He's compiled all his latest works and transformed his personal residence for one spectacular show.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC FOR ONE NIGHT ONLY.

THEATER & DANCE

COMEDY

Comedy at the Layover Weekly stand-up with rotating comedians. Tuesdays, 8:30 p.m., free. The Layover, 1517 Franklin St., Oakland. 510-834-1517. OaklandLayover.com.

Marga's Funny Mondays Weekly comedy and variety showcase featuring a rotating cast of comedians and hosted by local comedian Marga Gomez. Mondays, 8 p.m., $10. The Marsh Arts Center, 2120 Allston Way, Berkeley. 510-704-8291. TheMarsh.org.

North Pole Revue S.T.A.G.E. Theatre's annual holiday [illegible] comedy show. RSVP required. 925-943-7469. Starting Dec. 2. Fridays, 7:35 p.m. Saturdays, 2:15 & 7:15 p.m. Sundays, 2:15 p.m. Continues through Dec. 11. $14. [illegible] Lesher Center for the Arts, 1601 Civic Dr., Walnut Creek. 925-295-1400. LesherArtsCenter.org.

Open Mic Comedy A weekly open mic for both veteran and up-and-coming comedians. Sundays, 8 p.m., one-drink minimum. Continental Club, 1658 12th St., Oakland. 510-673-8813. ContinentalClub.com.

[illegible] Comedy A monthly showcase of improvised [illegible]. First Saturday of every month, 8 p.m., $7-$10. Temescal Arts Center, 511 48th St., Oakland. 510-923-3078. TemescalArtsCenter.org.

[illegible] A vaudevillian game show style MC [illegible] and poetry slam hosted by Jamie Kennedy and Geoff Trenchard. First Thursday of every Month, 8:30 p.m., $7-$10. Oakland Metro Operahouse, 630 3rd Street, Oakland. 510-763-1146. OaklandMetro.org.

DANCE-PERFORMANCE

[illegible] A dance on [illegible] in the school's [illegible] PE 140. Fri. Dec. 2, 8 p.m. Sat. Dec. 3, 2 & 8 p.m., $6. CSUEastBay.edu/Arts. Cal State East Bay, 25800 Carlos Bee Blvd., Hayward. 510-885-3000. CSUEastBay.edu.

Origins of Self The Saint Mary's College Dance Company's fall performance features seven student [illegible] by choreographers [illegible], Kelly Dickerson, [illegible], Kelsey Peterson, Liam Recardo, and [illegible], and more. Dec. 1-3, 8 p.m. $6. LeFevre Theatre, Saint Mary's College, Moraga. 925-631-4381.

THEATER & PERFORMING ARTS

Mame [illegible] in the Berkeley Playhouse. Sundays, 12 & 5 p.m. Saturdays, 2 & 7 p.m., Thursdays, Fridays, 7 p.m. Continues through Dec. 18. $17-$35. 510-845-8542. BerkeleyPlayhouse.org. Julia Morgan Center for the Arts, 2640 College Ave., Berkeley. 510-845-8542. JuliaMorgan.org.

Becoming Julia Morgan Belinda Taylor's play about the Bay Area architect [illegible], directed by [illegible] and featuring Jane Stevens as Morgan. Starting Dec. 2. Sundays, Thursdays-Saturdays, 8 p.m. Continues through Jan. 8. $35. 800-838-3006. BrownPaperTickets.com. Berkeley City Club, 2315 Durant Ave., Berkeley. 510-848-7800. BerkeleyCityClub.com.

[illegible] [illegible] black comedy about four girls from the tiny town of Clear Creek. Thursdays-Saturdays, 8 p.m. Continues through Dec. 10. $10-$20. [illegible] Subterranean Theatre, 1834 Euclid Ave., Berkeley. 510-864-6458.

The Hot Mikado Ellen Brooks' dazzling 1940s-style adaptation of Gilbert & Sullivan's *The Mikado*. Fridays, Saturdays, 8 p.m., Sundays, 2 p.m. Continues through Dec. 11. $20. Masquers Playhouse, 105 Park Pl., Richmond. 510-232-4031. Masquers.org.

Lost for Magic: Lab Run 2011 With original experimental theater works by Ph.D. students at UC Berkeley's Graduate Program for Performance Studies. Dec. 1-2, 8 p.m. Sat. Dec. 3, 2 & 8 p.m. $8. Zellerbach Hall, Room 7, UC Berkeley campus, Berkeley.

[illegible] Berkeley Rep's [illegible] interviews and moderates an [illegible] performance/discussion with [illegible]. Mon., Dec. 5, 7 p.m. free. Roda Theatre, 2025 Addison St., Berkeley. 510-647-2949. BerkeleyRep.org.

[illegible] Howard Petrick's romantic, autobiographical performance about his fight, as a GI, against the [illegible] War. He performs on Nov. 28. Thursdays, Fridays, 7 p.m., Saturdays, 8:30 p.m. Continues through Dec. 10. $15-$50. The Marsh Arts Center, 2120 Allston Way, Berkeley. 510-704-8291. TheMarsh.org.

Restoration Comedy of Manners Festival Subterranean Shakespeare presents a staged reading series. This week: William Wycherly's *The Country Wife*, directed by Jessica Eaton. Mon., Dec. 5, 7:30 p.m. $10. Berkeley Fellowship of Unitarian Universalists, 1924 Cedar St., Berkeley. 510-841-4824. BFUU.org.

Scrooge! [illegible] presents [illegible] *A Christmas Carol*. Rated PG for spooky ghosts. Starting Dec. 3. Sat. Dec. 3, 8 p.m. Sun. Dec. 4, 7 p.m. Thursdays, Fridays, 8 p.m. Saturdays, 3 p.m. Sundays, 2 & 7 p.m. Continues through Dec. 18. $12-$29. Town Hall Theatre, 3535 School St., Lafayette. 925-283-1557.

The Soldier's Tale Tom Ross and former San Francisco Ballet principal dancer Muriel Maffre direct this re-imagined production based on a Russian folk tale about a soldier who makes a deal with the devil. Sundays, 2 & 7 p.m., Wednesdays-Saturdays, 8 p.m. Tuesdays, 7 p.m. Continues through Dec. 18. $20-$50. Aurora Theatre, 2081 Addison St., Berkeley. 510-843-4822. AuroraTheatre.org.

White Christmas The [illegible] adaptation of Irving Berlin's 1954 musical about a Vermont inn. Fridays, 8 p.m. Saturdays, 2:30 & 8 p.m. Sundays, 2:30 & 7:30 p.m., Thu., Dec. 1, 8 p.m. Continues through Dec. 18. $24-$48. Lesher Center for the Arts, 1601 Civic Dr., Walnut Creek. 925-295-1400. LesherArtsCenter.org.

The Wild Bride Kneehigh's [illegible] presents a grown-up fairy tale about a girl's journey through a [illegible] wonderland. Adapted and directed by Emma Rice. Starting Dec. 2. Fridays, Saturdays, 8 p.m., Sun. Dec. 4, 1 p.m., Dec. 6-9, 8 p.m., Saturdays, 2 & 8 p.m. Sundays, 2 & 7 p.m. Tuesdays, 8 p.m. Wednesdays, 7 p.m. Thu. Dec. 15, 8 p.m. Thursdays, 2 & 8 p.m. Continues through Dec. 20. $17-$60. Roda Theatre, 2025 Addison St., Berkeley. 510-647-2949. BerkeleyRep.org.

The World's Funniest Bubble Show The Amazing Bubble Man, otherwise known as Louis Pearl, brings his [illegible] performance back to The Marsh. Sundays, 11 a.m. Through Dec. 31, 11 a.m. Continues through Dec. 31. $8-$50. The Marsh Arts Center, 2120 Allston Way, Berkeley. 510-704-8291. TheMarsh.org. ●

PICKS

The Soldier's Tale

Muriel Maffre's idea of casting a puppet as the male lead in her version of C.F. Ramuz and Igor Stravinsky's 1918 ballet *The Soldier's Tale* was, by all measures, a huge risk. But it worked beautifully. A lot of that owes to Maffre and co-director Tom Ross' decision to consolidate the soldier-puppet's voice and narrator roles, both played by L. Peter Callender in this production. A brilliant Shakespearian actor with a rich baritone, Callender lends emotional depth and resonance to what would otherwise be a mere cipher. Maffre, who was a prima ballerina at San Francisco Ballet before venturing into theater, plays both the puppeteer and love interest — an ailing princess with an evocative solo dance number. Joan Mankin is crippingly funny and unnerving as the devil who lures our hero into a Faustian bargain. Ear Play chamber quartet handles the score, supplying a forceful, terse soundscape to undergird Callender's stentorian vocals. The format is true World War I, but the parable — which deals with avarice and the perils of class ascent — could easily apply to present-day society. Through Dec. 18 at Aurora Theatre (2081 Addison St., Berkeley). $10-$55. 510-843-4822 or *AuroraTheatre.org*. — *Rachel Swan*

Pina Bausch's Danzon

[illegible] Pina Bausch was a fearless explorer of life's inner landscapes. When the Juilliard-trained dance-theater artist died in 2009, she left a legacy of works that blend modern, classical, and folk dance with film, spoken word, bleakness, fantasy, and even brutality — works that garnered prestigious awards and polarized audiences worldwide. One of those works is 1995's *Danzon*, performed at Zellerbach Hall (Bancroft Way at Dana St., Berkeley) on Friday and Saturday, Dec. 2-3, in Tanztheater Wuppertal Pina Bausch's only US performances on its current tour.

Danzon.

A dapper man crawls onto the stage to open the piece, a one-hundred-minute travelogue from birth to death with Mahler, Mexican pop, video projections, nude women in wheelbarrows, bittersweet loss of illusion, hope and humor along the way. In other words, a lot like life — with the possible exception of the nude women in wheelbarrows. 8 p.m. $30-$58. 510-642-9988 or CalPerformances.org. — *Claudia Bauer*

The Hot Mikado.

THEATER REVIEW

SOME LIKE IT HOT

Masquers dusts off a swing-era *Mikado*.

By Rachel Swan

Probably the only thing more engaging than an actual Savoy Opera is an "updated" version of a Savoy Opera — meaning same general plot but altered libretto, newer costumes, songs rendered in "swing" form, and the word "hot" inserted in the title. Ergo, *The Hot Mikado*, adapted by David H. Bell from the original *Mikado* by Gilbert and Sullivan. It's currently in repertory at Masquers Playhouse in Point Richmond with a cast that bears little resemblance to the original 1939 Broadway ensemble (which was all African-American) but that features enough talent to breathe life into what otherwise might be fusty material.

Granted, many of the jokes in *The Hot Mikado* seem as lewd and droll today as they did 72 years ago. For one thing, it's set in a town called Titipu (titty-poo), where citizens are hog-tied by an extremely severe penal code: Flirting is punishable by death, as is suicide, adultery, cavorting with an otherwise condemned person, and most anything that would qualify as pleasurable or taboo in our world. Yet in defiance of both the law and Freudian theory, the repressed Titiputians are anything but repressed. All they do is stand around and bat eyes at one another. We get a taste of that right from the opening, when a grand dame named Peek a Boo (Kimberly Miller) emerges to give us the lowdown. "Welcome to Titipu," she coos, sipping from a flask and opening her fan with a sharp click, as though it were a punctuation mark.

Show Details

The Hot Mikado runs through December 17 at Masquers Playhouse (105 Park Place, Point Richmond). $20. 510-232-4031 or Masquers.org

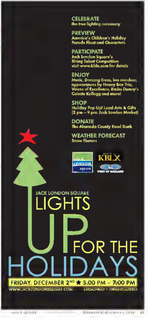
From there, it's fairly easy to see where this *Mikado* is going. The curtains open to reveal a four-member band: sax, trumpet, trombone, and keyboard. The set, designed by Bruce Lackovic, is kitschily Japanese: long branches in painted pots, paper lanterns dangling from the ceiling, a blue scrim in the background to give the sense that we're all sitting in a temple. Director Ellen Brooks doubled as the show's lighting designer, and she tempers some of the clichés by bathing the world of Titipu in a dusky orange glow. The gents enter, all wearing pinstripe suits and fedoras that befit the cast of *Chicago*. They launch into the show's first chorus line: "We Are Gentlemen of Japan." Larded with four-part harmonies that singers Sean Beecroft, Bob Calugaran, Anthony V. Lucido and Cliff Stanfield are mostly capable of hitting, it starts things off on a high note.

Though its script is dated, the play is surprisingly entertaining — more so for kids than adults, as evidenced by the peal of little-girl laughter that resonated from a back row last Saturday every time an actor uttered the word Titipu. And its storyline isn't particularly hard to follow. In a nutshell, the emperor's son Nanki-Poo (Beecroft) has disguised himself as a wandering musician in order to win and wed the beautiful Yum Yum (Amy Lucido), but his plans are foiled by the lord high executioner Ko-Ko (Coles Grandman), who is also competing for Yum Yum's affections — and who will only concede her hand on the condition that Nanki-Poo agree to be decapitated by month's end. From there, complications ensue, not so much for the purpose of plot as for the sake of justifying two acts' worth of song-and-dance numbers.

That, of course, is the main selling point of any *Mikado*, although the musical talent in this cast varies. In truth, Beecroft seems like an odd choice for the male lead, given that he appears to be modulating his voice for some of the alto parts (though it's also possible he had a cold last week). But his counterparts more than make up for it. Lucido has a strong, supple musical theater voice that can easily accommodate one solo number and two duets. Grandman, while not exactly a formidable singer, still lends delicacy and comic diffidence to his role as Ko-Ko. Keith Stevenson makes a fabulously imposing Mikado, with his gold watch chain and faint British accent. But the real star is Debra Harvey, who plays Nanki-Poo's jilted suitor Katisha. Clearly the best vocalist of the lot, she sings about love and heartbreak in a lustrous alto that easily deepens to a Bessie Smith-style growl.

The Hot Mikado doesn't offer much by way of surprises — it's swing-era musical theater after all. Yet it's cute, endearing, and mercifully succinct. In this case, each act clocked in at a sharp fifty minutes. That's just long enough to soak up the narrative and feel sympathy for the characters, and not quite long enough to be annoyed by, say, the distinct rattle of an Altoids tin in Row 5. Old-style musicals are a Masquers Playhouse specialty, and the directors there are good at choosing repertory that a small theater company can handle. Sure, it's light stuff. But it works. ●

Rachel.Swan@EastBayExpress.com



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LECTURES & LIT

Plumbing a Mysterious Friendship

Christopher Sandford says Harry Houdini and Arthur Conan Doyle were the Jagger and Richards of their day

British author Christopher Sandford has made a name for himself with celebrity biographies of Kurt Cobain, Steve McQueen, Roman Polanski, and many others. His latest effort seems a major departure: an examination of the oft-contentious and overall peculiar friendship between two of the early 20th century's most beloved luminaries, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Harry Houdini.

Christopher Sandford

"It wasn't really an abrupt or even conscious decision to suddenly climb up the evolutionary ladder from the likes of Sting, David Bowie, etc., to Conan Doyle and Houdini," said Sandford, who will be at Books Inc. (1760 Fourth St., Berkeley) on Monday, December 5. Sandford studied history at Cambridge, has published articles on historical subjects throughout his career, and seems to have the balancing of these two areas of professional interest down to a well-scheduled science. "All the time I was writing about Conan Doyle and Houdini, I was simultaneously doing another book on my old friends the Rolling Stones. Mondays and Tuesdays were the Stones, Thursdays and Fridays were Spiritualism, and Wednesdays I tried to reserve for making the mental adjustment between the two, while also attending to more immediate matters like mowing the yard and taking the trash out."

Masters of Mystery serves as dual biography of the Sherlock Holmes creator and the pioneering illusionist, and as a survey of the wildly popular Spiritualist movement of the time. But its main focus is the relationship between Houdini and Conan Doyle: the similarities in their psychological profiles, their increasing fascination with séances, psychic photography, ectoplasm, and the like, and how their positions on such things — Conan Doyle as evangelist and Houdini as myth-busting skeptic (excepting when his sense of showmanship could be served otherwise) — played out over the course of decades.

Sandford first became interested in these celebs of yore as a young man at St. Aubyns, "a Hogwarts-like boarding school I was incarcerated at many years ago on the windswept south coast of England." One of his teachers there gave him a collection of Sherlock Holmes tales that, just the day before we spoke, Sandford had read aloud from to his son's class, "which proves, if nothing else, that a well-made book really does stand the test of time." The other teacher was "something of a Dickensian, mildly terrifying character by today's standards, but was also fired by a deep love of English literature in all aspects, as well as of stagecraft in general and Houdini specifically." (Sandford himself has a flair for the dramatic, with a florid vocabulary that makes good and proper use of such wonderful words as "inquisition," "legerdemain," and the Shakespearean "incarnadine.")

Conan Doyle and Houdini were an odd couple indeed — the former large, imposing, and overwhelmingly English, the latter a compactly built, brash, first-generation Hungarian-American Jew — yet both captured the Western imagination with their art and ideas. The friction between their differing beliefs on what, at the time, was a vastly popular, quasi-religious movement sweeping the US and Europe calls to mind an early-20th-century Mulder and Scully, without all that confusing sexual tension. Sandford doesn't necessarily find an obvious equivalent of their relationship in today's celebverse, but "having just written the Rolling Stones story," he said, "comparing the core Doyle-Houdini relationship to the Jagger-Richards one might be going too far, but not perhaps going entirely in the wrong direction. Both couples increasingly sniped — or still snipe — at each other in public, but both, it seems to me, are bound to the other by a sort of exasperated fondness and even love." 7 p.m., free. 510-525-7777 or BooksInc.net

— *Stefanie Kalem*

LECTURES

Artist Talk with Katherine Pennated The artist gives a talk for the closing of her mixed-media painting exhibition, Re-Charmers. Sun., Dec. 4, 3-6 p.m. The Compound Gallery & Artspace, 1167 65th St., Oakland. 510-601-1702. TheCompoundGallery.com.

Ball/Miletic: "The Revolving Restaurant as Hypnotism" Norwegian artist duo Bynne Ball and Dragan Miletic discuss revolving restaurants and how the moving Bullonnevala in cinema. Mon., Dec. 5, 7:30-9 p.m., 510-495-3500. ATC.Berkeley.edu. Canadian Auditorium, Sutardja Dai Hall, Berkeley.

Christopher Brown The figurative artist discusses his paintings as part of the Fall Artist Lecture Series. Sat., Dec. 3, 4 p.m. Berkeley Art Center, 1275 Walnut St. (in Live Oak Park), Berkeley. 510-644-6893. BerkeleyArtCenter.org.

Christopher Sandford: "Masters of Mystery: The Strange Friendship of Arthur Conan Doyle and Harry Houdini" The author discusses his book about the relationship between the 20th century magician-writer duo. Mon., Dec. 5, 7 p.m. Books Inc. Berkeley, 1760 Fourth St., Berkeley.

Classic Audible Theater: "The Real Books of War" The Soto Zen Buddhist Urban Vietnam veteran and author discusses his nonviolence advocacy. For more information: JacShellaykins2011@yahoo.com. Wed., Dec. 7, 7-8 p.m., $17. Center for Transformative Change, 2584 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Berkeley. 510-549-3733, TransformativeChange.org.

Robert West and Karl Oh: "In the Age of Wiggle Police Terror, Incarceration, No Jobs, Mis-Education, What Future for our Youth" A dialogue between one of the founding members of the Revolutionary Communist Party and the writer and racial justice activist, with Q&A. For more information: UCB_Lumenfresh Caddie_in. Fri., Dec. 2, 7 p.m. Pauley Ballroom, 2475 Bancroft Way, Berkeley. 510-647-6008. Berkeley.edu.

Eugene Royle: "Oakland 1917: The Bolshevik Revolution and the Struggle for Communism" A local presentation by Eugene Royle, Emeritus Professor of anthropology at Cal State Long Beach. Oakland ... open discussion. Sat., Dec. 3, 11 a.m. Temescal Branch Library, 5205 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. 510-595-7417. MarxistLibrary.org.

Mills College Art Oakland Series. Oakland Books The Los Angeles-based artist and assistant professor at the University of Southern California discusses her performance, writing, and visual art. Wed., Dec. 7, 7 p.m. Mills Lecture Series, Danforth Lecture Hall, Mills College, Oakland. 510-430-2755. Mills.edu.

Peter Russell: "Primacy of Consciousness: Why Mind is More Fundamental than Matter" The author, who holds degrees from Cambridge University in physics, experimental psychology and computer science, discusses a new worldview in which consciousness is more fundamental than space, time and matter. Wed., Dec. 7, 7:30 p.m. $15 suggested donation. presented Community Church, 1912 The Alameda, Berkeley. 510-528-3600.

LITERARY EVENTS

Alameda Island Poets and Writers Hosted by Ronette Bradley Beets. Wed., Dec. 7, 7 p.m. Books Inc. Alameda, 1344 Park St., Alameda. 510-525-7777. BooksInc.net.

Anne Winnsfeld A reading by the author of The Iowa Trilogy: Colors in the Mechanism of Bereavement, in the Maude Fife Room (315). Thu., Dec. 1, 6:30-8 p.m. 510-642-9480, Wheeler Hall, UC Berkeley, Berkeley.

Bay Area Books: Literacia Open Berkeley First Saturday of every month, 3-5 p.m. free. Strawberry Creek Lodge, 1320 Addison St., Berkeley. 510-841-8330.

Benjamin Doc Storm A reading with the author of Blood Business. Thu., Dec. 1, 6-7 p.m. 510-643-5347. Morrison Room, 101 Doe Library, Berkeley. 510-642-0137.

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PICKS

Luis Alberto Urrea

In *The Hummingbird's Daughter*, Literary Hall of Fame and American Book Award winner Luis Alberto Urrea told of the youth of his great-aunt Teresa, the real-life "Saint of Cabora." Seventeen years later, Teresa returns in *Queen of America* to heal, inspire, and fall in love amid the Mexican Revolution and turn-of-the-20th-century San Francisco, New York, and St. Louis. Berkeley Arts & Letters presents Urrea on Tuesday, Dec. 6 at the Hillside Club (2286 Cedar Street, Berkeley), with ticket proceeds going to the Alameda County Food Bank. 7:30 p.m. $12-$48. 800-838-3006 or BrownPaperTickets.com. *— Stefanie Kalem*

Open House and Red Book Sale

Shopping [illegible] color is the new black. Small Press Distribution holds a year-end sale at its warehouse (1341 Seventh St., Berkeley) on Sunday, Dec. 4, with 20- to 40-percent discounts, the biggest price cuts applying to select books with red covers. There will also be poetry readings by Jai Arun Ravine, Susanne de la Pruniere, Judith Goldman, Pamela Lu, and Marvin K. White. And snacks! Did we mention the snacks? 1-4 p.m., free. 510-524-1668 or SPDBooks.org. *— S.K.*

Thomas Lynch

Veteran [illegible] and man-about-the-Elmwood Thomas Lynch presents a [illegible] reading of *A Christmas Memory*, Truman Capote's semi-autobiographical tale of an unlikely friendship in rural Alabama, as part of a holiday party at Mrs. Dalloway's (2904 College Ave., Berkeley) on Friday, Dec. 2. Mulled wine and fruitcake will further sweeten the atmosphere. 7:30 p.m., free. 510-704-8222 or MrsDalloways.com. *— S.K.*

Olivier Said and Chef MikeC

Impassioned cooks, from novices to practically professionals: Your time has come. Olivier Said

Luis Alberto Urrea

and Chef MikeC, founders and teachers at the Kitchen on Fire! culinary school, have written a cookbook (also called *Kitchen on Fire!*) to serve as an in-home cooking boot camp, with each chapter serving as a class session and each culminating in a recipe in which readers can test their newfound skills. Ask the pair what a kitchen's [illegible] indispensable item is on Tuesday, Dec. 6 at Moe's Books (2476 Telegraph Ave., Berkeley). 7:30 p.m., free. 510-849-2087 or MoesBooks.com. *— S.K.*

by Berkeley Arts & Letters. Tue., Dec. 6, 7:30 p.m., $13-$48. 888-338-3006, BrownPaperTickets.com/event/196616. Hillside Club, 2286 Cedar St., Berkeley. 510-848-3227, HillsideClub.org.

Luis J. Rodriguez The writer and community [illegible] reads from his new memoir, *It Calls You Back: An Odyssey Through Love, Addiction, Revolutions and Healing*. Thu., Dec. 1, 6-8 p.m. EastSide Cultural Center, 2277 International Blvd., Oakland. 510-533-6629, EastsideArtsAlliance.org.

Lunch Poems A monthly noontime poetry reading series directed by UC Berkeley professor Robert Hass and featuring a rotating selection of faculty reading their favorite poems. First Thursday of every month. 12:10-12:50 p.m. Continues through May 3. free. LunchPoems.Berkeley.edu. Morrison Room, 101 Doe Library, Berkeley. 510-642-0137.

Lyrae Van Clief-Stefanon A Lunch Poems reading by the author of the [illegible] poetry collection. E-mail Poems@Library.Berkeley.edu for more information. Thu., Dec. 1, 12:10-12:50 p.m. Morrison Room, 101 Doe Library, Berkeley. 510-642-0137.

Rad Parents Share Their Favorite Kids' Books With Rad Dad editors Tomas Moniz and Jeremy Adam Smith, along with Jeff Chang and others. Sun., Dec. 4, 5-6:30 p.m. Pegasus Books Downtown, 2349 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. 510-649-1320, PegasusBookstore.com.

Scott Miller and Frank Portman The author/writer duo (Mr. T Experience, Game Theory, etc.) play music and give a reading for the release of the second edition of Scott Miller's book, *Music: What Happened?* Sun., Dec. 4, 4-7 p.m. $5-$10. 510-841-2082, LoudFamily.com. Starry Plough, 3101 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. 510-841-2082, StarryPloughPub.com.

Sean [illegible] The Berkeley musician and author reads from his new book, [illegible]: *The Making of a Wedding* [illegible], and plays songs. Thu., Dec. 1, 7 p.m. Subterranean Arthouse, 2179 Bancroft Way, Berkeley. SubterraneanArthouse.org.

Spinning a Yarn Storytelling Listen to the tales and watch wool spinning. Sat., Dec. 3, 11-3:30 p.m. Tilden Park Little Farm, Tilden Park, end of Central Park Drive, Berkeley. 510-544-2233, EBParks.org/Parks/tilden.

Thomas Lynch Reading Truman Capote's *A Christmas Memory*, with mulled wine and fruitcake for guests. Fri., Dec. 2, 7:30 p.m. Mrs. Dalloway's, 2904 College Ave., Berkeley. 510-704-8222, MrsDalloways.com.

Tom [illegible] The month of [illegible] discusses his [illegible]. Wed., Dec. 7, 7 p.m. Books Inc. Berkeley, 1760 Fourth St., Berkeley.

More Listings Online
Get info about dozens more literary events at EastBayExpress.com or m.EastBayExpress.com

PUBLIC INTEREST

Avatar Metaphysical Toastmasters Club of Berkeley Public speaking club with a "metaphysical emphasis." First and third Thursday of every month, 6:45-8:45 p.m., free. St. John's Presbyterian Church, 2727 College Ave., Berkeley. 510-845-6830.

Free Book Exchange Give and get free books of all genres. Saturdays, Berkeley 9 a.m.-5 p.m. free. Bay Area Free Book Exchange, 12520 San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito. 510-[illegible]-6344.

Living Liberally: Drinking Liberally A political discussion group. First and third Sunday of every month. 11 a.m.-1 p.m. free. Luka's Taproom & Lounge, 2221 Broadway, Oakland. 510-451-4677, LukasTaproom.com.

Living Liberally: Drinking Liberally A political discussion group. First and third Tuesday of every month. 6:30-9:30 p.m., free. Spice Monkey Cafe, [illegible] St., Oakland. 510-208-6177, SpiceMonkeyCafe.com.

San Francisco Bay Trail Connection Public Meeting A public meeting to discuss the proposed trail and bridge alternatives for the Bay Trail Project between Castro Street and the Richmond/San Rafael Bridge. Thu., Dec. 1, 7-9 p.m. Richmond Public Library, 325 Civic Center Plaza, Richmond. 510-620-6561, Ci.Richmond.ca.us/index.aspx?NID=1[illegible]

Shooting the Witnesses: Government Attacks on the Right to Observe The [illegible] Coast Committee Against Police Brutality and State Repression and Berkeley Copwatch present a community forum and video showing about recent violent responses by police agencies against Occupy movements. Sat., Dec. 3, 2-4:30 p.m. $5-$10 suggested donation. 510-548-0425, BerkeleyCopWatch.org. Humanist Hall, 390 27th St., Oakland. 510-[illegible], HumanistHall.org.

Social Justice Committee All are welcome to attend this bi-weekly meeting in the Fellowship Hall's foyer. First and third Sunday of every month. 12:30 p.m. donations encouraged. Berkeley Fellowship of Unitarian Universalists, 1924 Cedar St., Berkeley. 510-841-4824, BFUU.org.

Songs, Sounds, and Socialism at the Starry Plough The Alameda County Peace and Freedom Party and Movement presents an open discussion on anarchism, socialism, and the Occupy and Street movement. Sat., Dec. 3, 1-4 p.m. Starry Plough, 3101 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. 510-841-2082, StarryPloughPub.com.

SPOKEN WORD

The Berkeley Slam Poems by [illegible], Jamie DeWolf, Sevan, and [illegible]. Hosts rotating line-up of the bands, and [illegible]. Up to $150 in weekly cash prizes. Wednesdays, 8 p.m., $8. Starry Plough, 3101 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. 510-841-2082, StarryPloughPub.com.

The Blue [illegible] A weekly open mic for up-and-coming spoken word artists, poets, and comedians. Sign-up begins at 8 p.m. Tuesdays, 8:30 p.m. free. Dorsey's Locker, 5817 Shattuck Ave., Oakland. 510-428-1935, DorseysLocker.com.

The Golden State Poetry Slam and Open Mic Hosted by three-time Grand Slam Champion [illegible], with music by DJ [illegible]. All ages welcome. Earn points to be on the 2012 Slam team. First and third Sunday of every month, 6:30-10 p.m. $5-$7. 602-586-8617 [illegible]. Grand Lake Coffee House, 441 Grand Ave., Oakland. 510-[illegible], GrandLakeCafe.com.

Last Word Poetry Series Poetry/discussion and open mic. First Friday of every month, 7 p.m. First Saturday of every month, 7 p.m. free. Nefeli Caffe, 1854 Euclid St., Berkeley. 510-[illegible].

Poetry [illegible] A twice-monthly open mic with featured readers. Hosted by poetry ensemble [illegible]. First and third Tuesday of every month, 7:30-8 p.m. free. World Ground Cafe, 3726 MacArthur Blvd., Oakland. 510-[illegible], WorldGroundCafe.com.

Beyond Poetics Open mic poetry readings. First Friday of every month, 8 p.m., free. Facebook/BeyondPoetics. Good Bellies Cafe, 4608 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. 510-[illegible], GoodBelliesCafe.com. ●

AQUARIUM AGE

THE WAY TO A HAPPY HOLIDAY

For the week of November 30-December 6, 2011

By Rafee Finn

The only way I know to express the astral intensity of this week and the next several weeks is to modify that old cliché: "Fasten your seatbelts. It's going to be a wild ride." And while you may think that I am exaggerating, over the course of the coming days and nights as emotional tides rise to higher than usual holiday levels, you're more likely to think that I was underestimating the intensity.

As families and friends gather to celebrate a variety of festivals that began with Thanksgiving and will crescendo with the solstice (in all its iterations, from the actual day of the return of the light to Hannukah to Christmas to Kwanza) and ends with the New Year (which is also solstice related), deep rooted and long denied feelings are likely to surge through the festivities, adding new depth to the meaning of "dysfunctional." (I'm tired just thinking about it.) Be prepared for meltdowns and for a wide range of declarations, some pronouncing independence and others proclaiming revolution. The best way to ride these planetary waves is to remember the underlying message of the season: Peace and goodwill.

Several sources contribute to this week's complexity. First, we are in the wake of a solar eclipse on November 25 and headed straight for the swell of a lunar eclipse on December 10. So don't be surprised if the world continues to wobble. The eclipse effect is often felt before and after the actual events, which is why they are believed to distort time. Add in Mercury Retrograde and that time distortion climbs off the charts. This is the final Mercury Retrograde of the year, which means some of its review is going to include looking back on the details of twelve months of unbelievable shifts, personal and collective — a review, by the way, that is completely appropriate for this time of year.

Unfortunately, the frustration of the retrograde is going to collide with two equally potent configurations. A Venus/Pluto conjunction stimulates everyone's need to have it their way, especially when it comes to love. The signature of this conjunction is fanatic love. So don't be surprised if you become obsessed with someone or something. And while passion is always a good thing, Pluto often insists on having its desires acknowledged. And given that we are also in a Sun/Mars square, the inclination to push to have what we want is going to be off the charts. A square between the Sun and Mars tends to incline dispositions toward being hasty, restless and irritable. (I won't make my joke about those Disney dwarves just yet.) As that hot-blooded wind coalesces with the insistence of Pluto/Venus and the "detail fatigue" of Mercury Retrograde, many of us are likely to be more than just a tad testy.

I realize you might get tired of the constant reminder to "play nice with the other children," but given the escalating existential anxiety about our personal and collective situations, making kindness a constant companion through this holiday season is still the wisest possible choice.

If you know your Ascendant and/or your Moon Sign, read that, too.

ARIES Channel your intensity into creative projects and you will find the release and relief you're craving. This may sound like a no-brainer, but actually concentrating on a specific idea might be harder than you think.

TAURUS Rather than trying to deny what you're feeling, give yourself permission to express your emotions, even if that makes you uncomfortable. We all come into this world needing love, a need that doesn't diminish with age.

GEMINI Confrontations with significant others over issues of safety and security could pose a problem, especially if you're unable to find the solid ground of compromise. I'm not suggesting you capitulate, but reaching out might start the process.

CANCER Try not to let harsh words spoken in the heat of the moment disrupt an otherwise beneficial relationship. Practice holding your breath until your blood pressure settles down.

LEO You thought it was a financial problem, but you're slowly realizing it's all about self esteem. Find positive ways to improve your self image and almost instantly your confidence will return.

VIRGO It won't be easy holding your tongue, so figure out a strategy that will allow you to discharge in a healthy manner. You don't have to burn down the house to renovate it.

LIBRA It isn't always necessary to say everything you're thinking, so rather than go into conversations that may stir difficult feelings in others, keep your own counsel. Some topics are best kept private.

SCORPIO The best way to deal with crabbiness, your own or others, is to find healthy ways to alter the situation. Start with laughter: Find what's funny in your "bad" situation and you'll be amazed by how quickly your attitude will shift.

SAGITTARIUS Resist the temptation to give a few people a piece of your mind. You may have suffered fools for too long, but letting loose is likely to worsen your situation, not improve it.

CAPRICORN Speak words of love and you will definitely get everything you ask for — just try not to be greedy. And of course, remember to always be generous in return.

AQUARIUS You're required to handle a number of difficult political situations, and while you would prefer not to be the designated diplomat, you're actually much better suited for it than anyone else in the family.

PISCES You can squabble with partners or you can remember that we are all under more stress than ever before, and therefore more than ever in need of compassion. ■

For More Info

Rafee Finn specializes in Transformational Astrology. For readings, call 1-888-937-9264, write P.O. Box 343, New York, NY 10025, visit AquarianAge.com or e-mail Rafee@AquarianAge.com. Copyright © 2011 by Rafee Finn.

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FOOD & DRINK

The jerk chicken spends three days in a dry rub and a marinade before being slow-roasted. Chris Duffey

KINGSTON STYLE

"Permanent pop-up" Kingston 11 serves home-style Jamaican cuisine.

By Jesse Hirsch

Before you finish your meal at Kingston 11, owner Adrian Henderson is likely to bless you multiple times. Willing to wait while they clean off a table? "Bless." Enjoyed your cheesecake? "Bless." It's a secular pleasantry, on a level with "Have a nice day" from a diner waitress.

That's not to say deeper blessings aren't in store. Wait until you try the jerk chicken.

Open only Friday and Saturday nights, this home-style Jamaican joint has been colonizing Guerilla Café in Berkeley for just over a year. It's part of a wave of "permanent pop-ups" restaurants that want their own space, but remain stuck in someone else's kitchen (thanks, economy). Japanese, Moroccan, and Mexican places have popped up and moved on from Guerilla, but Kingston 11 soldiers on.

When I first walked in on a Friday night, there was a momentary feeling of stumbling into a private party. Dancehall reggae thumped courtesy of a live DJ, and everyone was throwing up hands and belting out refrains. There's an easy grace to Kingston 11's staff, and lines were blurred between server and customer. Everyone was breaking bread and grooving, and I felt like a lost tourist.

Then Henderson emerged from the fray. Approaching everyone who enters, he gives the sense that yes, this is a private party, but you just happen to be the most honored guest. "Bless."

The diverse crowd was a well-heeled, fashionable mix, straight out of a Benetton catalog. It filled a tiny space: a handful of small tables, one big one up front, and a string of counter seats lining the kitchen. In such close quarters, everyone's your brother.

When I asked about the house *sangria*, the server brought a free glass to sample. Sweet and nondescript, its key charm was being ladled out of a Home Depot bucket. Fifteen dollars for a pitcher clinched the sale.

I started with plantain wedges, roasted then deep fried, set off by a splash of spicy black bean purée. After too many mealy sweet potato fries of late, I found comfort in these ineffably crisp-meets-creamy delights. Salt cod and potato fritters were airy little hockey pucks served with a light pink tomato cream sauce. These opening dishes augured happy times ahead.

First was the jerk chicken, the litmus for a Caribbean restaurant's chops. Chef and co-owner Nigel Jones gives his meat one and a half days in a pimento, onion, and allspice dry rub, another day and a half in a fiery lime marinade, then he slow roasts it and gives it a run in the smoker. The resulting flavor is intricate, smoky, and deep, pierced with the lasting burn of Scotch Bonnet peppers. The meat is indescribably moist and tender, inspiring a fleeting bit of home-cook envy. Generous portion, too.

The menu advertises salmon steaks cooked in a ginger/rum butter potion, but I mostly tasted onion and cayenne. The pan-seared flesh was a bit blackened, with the crisp crust enveloping a moist, flaky center. (A note from Mr. Mom: be careful of the pin bones.) Sautéed Swiss chard with pecan nuts and dried cherries, served with a bit of balsamic tang, rounded out the dish. Again, the hearty portions were made for family-style sharing.

The oxtails were served in a thick, garlicky au jus gravy, spooned over a tall hillock of jasmine rice. Like the salmon, this dish is bone-in. You're left to gnaw on each two-inch tail segment by hand (though this can be a little goopy) or inefficiently pry it off the bone with a fork. More time tenderizing in the pot would have done this legwork for you, while cooking off some surplus fat. By contrast the rice was expertly prepared and not too clumpy, a light foil for the weighty stew.

Kingston 11's vegetarian entrée feels a bit like an afterthought, like the "veggie burger" at In-N-Out (lettuce, onions, and tomatoes on a bun). It's nothing more than a simmered vegetable medley served over brown rice: green beans, carrots, tomatoes, broccoli, and potatoes. There's a light coconut milk curry drizzled over the top, but it's still a bit lifeless. A smaller portion of this dish was served with the chicken, a satisfactory side. It just didn't have enough oomph to stand on its own.

After our lumberjack meals, my dining companions and I felt that dessert would be overkill. Our defenses were easily battered by the server's charm, though; we were eating rum cake and tropical cheesecake within minutes. The latter came from Rouschelle's Cheesecakes in San Leandro: dreamy little coconut and mango disks, while the former is house-made. The rum cake was better-than-average angel food, a little dry but juiced up with booze and strawberry slices.

But let me revisit the charming service. The sociable crew at Kingston 11, working at a roughly one-to-one ratio with the customers, is a genial, rollicking lot. There's a playfulness and warmth that bonds them together and uplifts the whole experience. Henderson says they're all family and friends, but you could've figured that out.

He and Jones started Kingston 11 as a Sunday night dinner party, a moveable feast to showcase their cooking styles to friends. When word spread and strangers started showing up ("I was like, 'Who's that dude?'" said Henderson), they took it to the next level. Even though the party is now for profit, they've retained the same homey come-on-over feel.

After a year at Guerilla Café, the duo is itching for a permanent space, complete with a real kitchen (much of their menu is currently prepped in Emeryville) and a bigger seating area. Henderson thinks the food they're making now only hints at their potential. "Picture eating that jerk chicken fresh out of the smoker," he said. Yes, I'd like that.

Note: After two more dinners on December 2 and 3, Kingston 11 will be closed for the rest of the month. Chef Jones will spend December perfecting his cooking techniques in Jamaica, and will return on January 6. ◆

Jesse.Hirsch@EastBayExpress.com

Kingston 11
1620 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley
510-214-2311
Hours: Fri-Sat. 6:30-10 p.m.
Reservations accepted
Cash only

Sample Menu

Plantains with Black Beans	$6
Salt Cod Fritters	$7
Jerk Chicken	$14
Salmon Steak in Ginger Rum Butter	$15
Oxtail Stew	$12

WHAT THE FORK

BE OUR GUEST

An experiment struggles to take off and an activist fights for workers' rights.

By Jesse Hirsch

Scott Cameron, a real estate developer with no restaurant experience, is conducting a business experiment: for two-week periods, he loans out a Rockridge commercial kitchen and dining area to different chefs. Cameron takes home profits from beer and wine sales, as well as a portion of each chef's gross.

The opening weeks of his venture, known as Guest Chef (5337 College Ave., Oakland; 510-658-7378), have seen a revolving parade of personalities in the kitchen: the Oakland Fire Department, a Mexican grandmother who never cooked outside of her home, and an outspoken advocate of the Slow Food movement.

The novelty-hungry dining public loves places like this (at least in theory), and Guest Chef has garnered much food-blog support since opening in early November. But as the initial hype dies down, Cameron is discovering some issues with the model.

I stopped by Sunday to check out the space, meeting Cameron and his kitchen consultant and friend, Mark Valentine, for lunch. Current guest chef Vere Clemmetti is a well-seasoned Italian cook with experience as a cooking instructor, menu developer, and volunteer coordinator at Slow Food San Francisco. But for almost two hours on Sunday, smack in the heart of lunch hour, I was the only customer.

On the first weekend Guest Chef opened for dinner-only service, the tiny space was packed from start to finish. Cameron said the kitchen team, a small crew of firehouse cooks from the Oakland FD, stacked the house with customers of their own ilk. "It was a charity event for the fire department, and we had wall-to-wall firefighters and EMTs," he said. The chefs, who already had experience feeding large numbers of hungry colleagues, had no problem keeping up with demand.

The next guest chef, home cook Eva Santillanes, didn't fare quite as well. At her first meal service, she was quickly overwhelmed by the large group of curiosity seekers who had heard some Guest Chef buzz on the food blogosphere. Luckily Valentine, formerly a chef at Bucci's in Emeryville, was able to help her smooth out the wrinkles. By the second day, Santillanes was much better equipped to handle customer ebbs and flows.

It turned out the ebbs would be far more prominent. After an initial tsunami of customers, Santillanes' next two weeks were fairly quiet, according to Cameron. As a home cook, she lacked the public profile to help fill Guest Chef with customers.

Culinary followings can take months and years to cultivate, certainly longer than the two-week stints available at Guest Chef. I heard two women with strollers discussing its concept while walking down College Avenue. "Cool idea, but how do you know the cook is any good?" asked one. This may be the essential problem.

Vere Clemmetti's kale salad at Guest Chef Jesse Hirsch

The solution, according to Cameron, is to take on guest chefs who already have a strong following and social media presence. Chef Clemmetti has many friends and colleagues in the Bay Area food community. Still, she said business thus far has been "very disappointing," with most customers being people she already knew. "What can you do?" she frowned.

The next guest chef will be Shellie Kitchen of the San Francisco-based food truck Brass Knuckle. She is eager to make the leap from mobile food to brick and mortar, and Guest Chef is a perfect transitional step. Kitchen has a significant fan base from appearances at Off the Grid and elsewhere, so Cameron hopes she'll draw in enough crowds to make Guest Chef profitable (for her and for him). Time will tell.

A Voice for Oakland's Restaurant Workers

History shows us that social justice movements often start with one agitator for change. For restaurant workers in Oakland, Katie Lefkowitz may just be that firebrand.

Lefkowitz has worked in the East Bay restaurant industry for the last five years. From the beginning, she saw an unusual disconnect: While much attention is paid to the welfare of animals served in farm-to-table establishments, no one seems to pay much mind to the workers. "We've got no benefits, no job security," she said. "Who's looking out for us?"

While she admits that Oakland's working conditions are no worse than in much of the country, Lefkowitz gazes longingly across the bay. In 2007 San Francisco implemented some of the most progressive laws for restaurant workers in the country. First and foremost, its minimum wage is the highest in the nation (nearly $10 an hour), and restaurant owners are not allowed to pay less than other employers just because of tips.

Additionally, SF restaurant workers are given mandatory sick leave, and employers are required to provide health insurance directly or through contributions to the city's universal health care plan, Healthy SF. Lefkowitz, who has spent time organizing unions and assisting San Francisco's Young Workers United, feels the East Bay's progressive backbone could be very receptive to reforms like San Francisco's.

Her plans are still in the formative stages, but the next step is to draft a rough working proposal and enlist the help of an Oakland City Council member. Lefkowitz is also seeking broader support and can be reached at katesonia@gmail.com. ●

Jesse.Hirsch@EastBayExpress.com

This column is culled from our blog of the same name.

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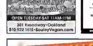
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RESTAURANTS & CAFES

North Berkeley Restaurants

Barney's Gourmet Hamburgers

1600 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley 510-849-2827. At Barney's you get a huge, juicy slab of ground beef topped with everything from ultra-sharp cheddar to Jamaican jerk sauce or grilled vegetables and marinara sauce. Don't eat beef? Or any meat at all? The same gourmet fixins top turkey burgers, veggie burgers, chicken, and tofu. Curly fries, ketchup, and soda will provide you with the other three basic American food groups. $

Celia's Mexican Restaurant

1854 Euclid Ave., Berkeley 510-549-1466. Now in a new location after 32 years in West Berkeley, Celia's serves large portions of standard Mexican favorites amid an ebullient, engaging, colorful ambience. This is a venerable venue that stays true to itself, and thus true to a long-beloved but now obsolete type of dining experience: the restaurant that strives neither to scare nor faze you, neither to intimidate nor humiliate you. The clean, comfortably comfortable, exuberantly relaxed restaurant whose portion size, ounce by ounce, still outpaces its prices; whose servers don't seem to hate you; and whose seating arrangements provide enough room to set down purse, jacket, and/or backpack and still spread out. In a sense, this is the original California cuisine. $-$$

Cha Am

1543 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley 510-848-9664. *Express* readers' frequent choice for Best Southeast Asian Restaurant, this upstairs nook has had its ups and downs both in terms of food and service. On good days its vegetarian *pad Thai* is abundant and sweet, while a seafood-rich menu offers lots of possibilities, such as curried prawns. A blend of fresh Thai herbs goes into every dish. $-$$

Cha-Ya

1686 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley 510-981-1213. Zen temple cuisine — *shojin* to those in the know — is strictly vegetarian, with architectural arrangements of land and sea veggies whose subtlety, sauced and unsauced, blasts any fears you might have about boring blandness. Chef-owner Atsushi Katsumata was trained in Japan. His menu includes shredded-vegetable and *soba* salads, satisfying noodle soups, and sushi. The potsticker-like *gyoza* positively burst with flavor. $$

Cioccolata Di Vino

1400 Shattuck Ave., Ste. C, Berkeley 510-848-1592. This combination wine bar, antipasti joint, and sweets emporium succeeds on all levels: The wine list is thoughtful and diverse; the small plates are creative and delectable; and the desserts, for the most part, are out of this world. Try the goat-cheese tartlet, the grilled eggplant rolls with prosciutto and mozzarella, the risotto-orange zest pie, and anything involving chocolate, especially the polenta cake and the chocolate chip cookies. Elegant yet friendly old world atmosphere. $$

Corso

1788 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley 510-704-8004. This tiny Berkeley storefront (from Rivoli's Wendy Brucker and Roscoe Skipper) evokes the cheerful ambience and simple, soulful cookery of a Florentine *trattoria*. Rich, creamy mascarpone polenta, rustic egg noodles with braised duck ragout, and grilled pork loin with sweet and sour onions are Italian comfort food at its best, and the steak tartare and mushroom-fontina white truffle oil pizza aren't so bad either. Get the olive oil cake for dessert. Impressive all-Italian wine list. $$$

Da Lian

1674 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley 510-883-1883. Chef/owner Renli Zou grew up in Dalian, a seaport city in the north of China fueled by lamb, wok-baked sesame bread, and serious garlic. Those things spark Zou's menu, too, especially lamb with Chinese pickled cabbage, an enormous soup that balances the yin of house-made pickles with the smoky yang of lamb fat. Order carefully: While the chef's northern Chinese fare catches fire, the bulk of his menu is neighborhood-takeout-grade Cantonese. $

Everest Cafe

1645 Solano Ave., Berkeley 510-526-4415. The bright, invigorating flavors of Nepal star at this friendly little Solano Avenue hideaway. In addition to delights like *momo* (steamed dumplings), *thukpa* (noodle soup), and *bhindi ko tarkari* (stewed okra and onion), there are several tantalizing Indian preparations on the menu; the samosa chaat, potato naan, and tender, smoky tandoori chicken are especially worthwhile. The desserts are avoidable, but the mango lassi is as sweet and creamy as a milkshake. Good selection of Tibetan beers. $-$$

Fatapple's

1346 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Berkeley 510-526-2260. The design of this beloved diner-with-bakery-counter may be an unlikely study in Eighties postmodernism — all deconstructed walls and primary colors — but the food is as traditional as the bakery's signature apple pies. Breakfast is popular, and the burgers, meatloaf, and gravy-drizzled turkey dinners are all fine versions. But the soul of this place resides in impossibly thick olallieberry milkshakes and seriously crispy onion rings. $-$$

Gioia Pizzeria

1586 Hopkins St., Berkeley 510-528-4692. Sold by the slice and by the pie, Will Gioia's thin-crust pizza has the body of a New Yorker but the soul of a Berkeleyan. Brooklyn-born Gioia earns marks with Manhattanites for his crisp, blistered crust and thinly layered sauce and cheese. But he makes the pizzas with organic flour and seasonal veggies, coming up with heretically delicious West Coast combinations. $

Guerilla Cafe

1620 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley 510-845-2233. Maybe the coolest place in the East Bay to ingest caffeine. The look pays tribute to Seventies Afro artwork, with rotating art by Bay Area artists and props to cultural icons like Nina Simone and Assata Shakur. Prices are North Berkeley-steep, but considering the coffee is organic, produce is from local farmers of color, and the waffles are great, you won't mind a little shelling out. $

The Mint Leaf

1504 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley 510-540-7900. The family that operates Khana Peena on Solano Avenue used to operate the Taste wine bar at this location. Reinvented with an Indian menu and aiming to convince American diners that Indian food really does go well with wine, it still features its main attraction, the wine machine: a gleaming metallic column ringed with bottles. Patrons insert wine cards to release their choices from an impressive international selection, one ounce at a time. The spinach and lentil side dishes are sparkly earthy and as colorful as stained glass. Dishes such as the Karahi chicken and *pindi kofte* are velvety and complex — although too spicy for some. $$

Nature's Express

1823 Solano Ave., Berkeley 510-527-5331. From sturdy black-bean and cheese burritos to velvety peanut-butter "milk" shakes to slender, tender air-baked golden fries to ten different varieties of "burger," everything served in this just-shed but spic-and-span vegan fast-food joint is not only meatless, but milkless, eggless, honeyless, and preservative-free. For a menu whose sixty-something choices span breakfast, lunch, dinner, drinks, agave-sweetened desserts, and snacks — and even includes a special section for kids — that's saying a lot. Sandwiches, wraps, salads, breakfast burritos, and other items made here with all-organic produce and no preservatives or chemical additives bring bright pure flavors to the fast-food scene, a scene in which vegans have long felt far too unwelcome. Especially creative touches are turnip slaw, a tempeh Reuben sandwich, and a fishless "Hold the Tuna" sandwich whose secret is chickpeas. $

RECENTLY REVIEWED

Kitchen 388

388 Grand Ave., Oakland, 510-663-3005. At the forefront of Adams Point's new renaissance, Kitchen 388 bears promise to anchor the neighborhood as a welcoming breakfast and lunch spot. Unfortunately, the service and menu can be uneven. The pulled-pork sandwich is excellent, as is the salmon tartine. The signature offering, a house-baked pop tart from pastry chef Alicia Toyooka, is well-made but served cold. Helmed by seasoned Bay Area chef Joseph Dunbar, Kitchen 388 has the potential to iron out its kinks over time. $

Doggy-Style Hot Dogs

[illegible] Park St., Alameda, 510-[illegible]. Undaunted with the tacky name and the artsy kitsch design sense, like a gourmet hot dog purveyor with shops, in the mold of Japa Dog in Vancouver and Show Dogs in San Francisco, Doggy-Style uses top-shelf sausages, plush sesame rolls, and house toppings to create eight signature combinations, many of them Asian-influenced. Standouts include the Dogzilla (bratwurst with Asian slaw, seaweed, teriyaki sauce, and wasabi mayo) and the Kimchi Pym (hot link with kimchi, cucumber, and spicy mayo). There's very little seating so you may want to take your dogs to go. $

Rockin' Crawfish

211 Foothill Blvd., Oakland, 510-251-1657. Rockin' Crawfish boasts a peculiar hybrid cuisine called "Asian Cajun," bred in the Vietnamese expat community on the Gulf Coast, transformed in Orange County, and finally reborn in the East Bay last year. The focus is boiled seafood, served in plastic bags at five levels of spiciness. Appetizers are cheap fried boardwalk fare, but the shellfish is solid and a gas to eat. Block out a few hours to get messy smashing crabs and ripping the heads off crawfish, washed down with cheap beer. And don't forget to tag the walls with a Sharpie. $-$$

Marica

5301 College Ave., Oakland, 510-985-8388. This comfortable Rockridge restaurant has transitioned away from its Asian-tinged seafood focus toward that of a general neighborhood bistro. Like the funky décor, some overwrought items are a hodge-podge, but chef Christopher Cheung has a deft hand with his mesquite-fired grill. All fish is wild-caught and sustainable, but meats are a mixed bag. Six-dollar all-night happy hour brings in a younger crowd after 7 p.m. $$$

Local Cafe

4,095 Piedmont Ave., Oakland, 510-922-8249. A warm space for Piedmont locals, bolstered by the solid cookery of chef Colin Rizzardi (formerly of Boot and Shoe Service, Pizzaiolo, and Camino). The menu rotates weekly, but recent highlights include creamy egg custard with ham and cheese on a house-made biscuit, and a rich tuna confit made with albacore slow-cooked in olive oil and orange zest. The sunny almost-coffeehouse space is well-suited for breakfast and lunch. $$

Northside Cafe

1878 Euclid Ave., Berkeley, 510-845-9853. The center space from which Northside Cafe dispenses vibrant breakfasts and lunches is historic. Where punks mingled thirty years ago at Rather Ripped Records, diners now sip emergency coffees and linger over a full menu of house-made soups, salads, scrambles, hot and cold sandwiches, stuffed baked potatoes, and old-fashioned egg, pancake, and French-toast breakfasts at sleek tables and along a counter spanning vast windows facing Cal. Co-owner Sarah Nasser's family also owns Grab N Go in downtown Berkeley, whose wildly inventive sandwich combos also appear here. Fresh-roasted turkey with cranberry sauce, spinach, and cheese for stalwarts, and an almost-too-tall-to-bite baked-eggplant/mushroom/pesto panini. The best deals are the baked potatoes, which far outweigh nearly everything else for the same price. $

Picoso Taqueria

1511 B Shattuck Ave., Berkeley, 510-540-4811. Tucked into a corner of the Epicurious Garden food mall, Picoso steers a middle course through the pricey culinary excesses of the Gourmet Ghetto. Burritos are just so-so, but the tacos are delicious, thanks to house-made tortillas made from organic corn. Topped with an okay-tasting chipotle crema, the shrimp tacos are fantastic. And for dessert, don't miss delicately crisp buñuelitos, hanky-sized sheets of deep-fried dough dusted with cinnamon sugar. $

Soul's Restaurant and Delicatessen

1473 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley, 510-848-3354. The Gourmet Ghetto's answer to a New York deli draws weekend breakfast crowds big enough to fill its sea of tables. Generically Jewish, it sports a long glass display case stocked with items like blintzes and tongue. Soul's matzoh balls are floaters, not sinkers — if such things matter to you — and your baba might just approve of the long-braised brisket, even though she might not recognize the steamed bok choy on the side. Half sour pickles, served free with meals, are the deal of the century. $$

Urbann Turbann

1870 Euclid Ave., Berkeley, 510-704-4169. Mere steps from UC Berkeley's North Gate, husband and wife team Aman and Chandler Mahal offer all-organic, cruelty-free, made-to-order wraps as big as bricks. Your choice of pillowy house-baked naan or dairy-free whole-grain roti is rolled tightly around masala potatoes and salad greens plus your choice of a number of slightly Berkeleyized Indian classics including boneless Sonoma chicken marinated overnight in organic yogurt then tandoor-cooked over an open flame. Canada-bred Aman began tweaking his family's favorite Punjabi recipes while still a teenager; his Urbann Turbann pork vindaloo is inspired by his personal favorite eighteen-hour procedure for preparing barbecued pulled pork. Meatless fillings include karahi paneer, mushroom mattar, and herbed seasonal vegetables. The fillings can also be had over brown rice in bowls, while Berkeley's best new bargain might be Urbann Turbann's $1 potato samosas. $

Vinnie's Cheesesteaks

1888 Euclid Ave., Berkeley, 510-845-5300. Feeding students for a living boils down to convenience, price, and speed. Within a block of UC Berkeley's North Gate, Vinnie's also soothes student nostalgia, affording that flash of recognition, that flush of gratitude, that flicker of identity as it greets its patrons, feeling very far from home, order chopped steak on a soft roll with Cheez Whiz. The result is juicy, salty, ooey-chewy, a culinary social-class mashup as the humble Philly-made hoagie roll in its nearly flavorless neutrality embraces Niman Ranch beef. Abundant, tasty tofu and Portobello mushroom cheese "steaks" are also served here, and other burgers and sandwiches round out the menu, as do huge deli dogs, heart-attack-in-a-basket heaps of garlic fries. Vinnie's onion rings, super-satisfying standouts, are crisp golden circlets as big as dog collars and almost as weighty. $

Price Key

Price codes assume diners will order a main course and beverage, share appetizers and desserts, and tip adequately: $ — up to $10 per person; $$ — $10-$25; $$$ — $25-$50; $$$$ — more than $50

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LAST CALL

SEEING RED

The Ruby Room thrives despite itself

By Ellen Cushing

The Ruby Room is dark. Dark like zero lighting, save for a few red bulbs and whatever natural light manages to creep in through the cracks under the door and around the boarded-up sidewalk-facing window; dark like a fully plausible former gang hangout (as legend has it) and current fail-safe pickup joint (as the nickname "boobie room" suggests); dark like the kind of place in which it is impossible to see the person you're talking to/sitting next to/making out with; and also dark like damn near impossible to take notes — which is probably for the better, seeing as Ruby isn't really the sum of its parts.

Those parts, by the way, are L-shaped, with a narrow, mirrored first room, a small, sweaty dance floor at the elbow, and a bigger back room with a seemingly-always-occupied pool set up, and a handful of little candle-lit tables and booths. The bar is long, facing a fake rock wall and a fairly standard but well-lit selection of bottles. Those bottles, in fact, are the only things in the whole place granted any appreciable light, as if ensconced in booty halo, which is probably telling. Here, alcohol is glorified, though less as an artifact of cocktail culture and more as a means to an end, whether that end is to make out with someone you couldn't pick out of a lineup or to just get drunk. Shots are generous, whiskey-Cokes taste less like Coke and more like whiskey, and it's all cheap, typically no more than $5, unless you're getting something really fancy. Which you shouldn't be.

Next to the dance floor is a sign that says "dancing prohibited," because The Ruby Room (132 14th St., Oakland, 510-444-7224) reportedly doesn't have a cabaret license (and we apparently live in the town from *Footloose*), and next to the suspiciously smoke-filled back room is a sign that says "No Smoking." You get the sense that a lot of things at Ruby defy logic and the law, but nobody quite seems to care. The place is, after all, co-owned and frequented by various members of the East Bay Rats motorcycle gang, and among a certain swath of young, tattooed Oaklanders, it has become a sort of smokier, dirtier, divier *Cheers* analogue: where everybody knows your name, even though they may not remember it tomorrow.

Like many places that are well-loved, Ruby is treasured somewhat irrationally, in spite of (or because of) that fact that it can be pretty unpleasant. There's the darkness, and the dirtiness, and the unmistakable smell of bleach everywhere, and what may be one of the worst-looking and -smelling women's bathrooms in a twenty-block radius. In the back room, you're forced to dodge pool cues and lung cancer; in the front, it's hearing loss and errant elbows, both prompted by a cast of reverb-and-fuzz-inclined DJs. It's almost always crowded, claustrophobically so on weekends, and definitely a fire hazard. Loud, sweaty, and a million other things people tend to avoid when possible, but yet here we are, completely by choice, ducking elbows and using our phones to light the way to the bathroom, smiling into the dark. ●

Ellen.Cushing@EastBayExpress.com

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Alameda Multicultural Market Community Farmers Bring a dish to share, preferably something inspired by your personal heritage or culture. Tue., Dec. 6, 6 p.m. and Oakland. Multicultural Community Center, 3030 Third St., Alameda. 510-521-6486.

Barbecue, Brew and Blues Ticket price covers a barbecue dinner, a glass of beer, and a blues show. Thursdays, 5:30-8:30 p.m. $20. [illegible] 2000 Allston Way, Berkeley. 510-225-6095. [illegible]

Chop Bar Oakland Night Pre Fixe Menu Featuring a weekly three-course pre fixe menu with wine pairings. Mondays, 5:30-10 p.m. Continues through Dec. 26, $30. Chop Bar, 247 Fourth St., Oakland. 510-834-2467. ChopBar[illegible].com.

Food & Market Happenings Workshop series in the market's experiential tent, with weekly lessons on varying topics, like homemade food preservation. Presented by Phat Beets Produce. PhatBeetsProduce.org. Saturdays, 12-2 p.m., and North Oakland Farmer's Market, Arlington Medical Center Parking Lot, Oakland.

Holidays in the Vineyards An old-time Chateau celebration with music, Oakland, gifts, and foods. Dec. 3-5, 12-5 p.m. and Chouinard Vineyards & Winery, 33853 Palomares Canyon Rd., Castro Valley. 510-582-9900. Chouinard.com.

Off the Grid A weekly food truck gathering on Shattuck Avenue at [illegible] Berkeley. Wednesdays, 5-9 p.m.

Omnivore Books and Allie C. "Chicken on Fire!" The founders and instructors of the Berkeley cooking school of the same name discuss their cookbook and in-depth cooking guide. Dec. 8, 7:30 p.m. Moe's Books, 2476 Telegraph Ave., Berkeley. 510-849-2087. MoesBooks.com.

OMFG Street Side Lunch Cuento Dips, Fist of Flour Pizza, and El Taco Bike, food trucks from the Oakland Mobile Food Group, set up shop weekly on the corner of 4th and Washington streets in Oakland. Thursdays, 11:30 a.m. 510-849-2033. TheOMFG.org.

Phat Beets Drop Swap A swap of produce, eggs, produce, and other food. First Saturday of every month, 11 a.m.-3 p.m., free. 510-686-3609. PhatBeetsProduce.org. North Oakland Farmers Market Arlington Medical Center Parking Lot, Oakland.

Sweet and Sour Tasting Featuring a flight of sour ales paired with sweet chocolate. Tue., Dec. 6, 6 p.m. Beer Revolution, 464 3rd St., Oakland. 510-452-2337. BeerRevolution.com.

Cool Vineyards Wine Market Featuring a four-course prix fixe menu with wine pairings, and a Q&A with winemaker Mick Unti. Thu., Dec. 1, 6-10 p.m. $65. Gather, 2200 Oxford St., Berkeley. 510-809-0400. GatherRestaurant.com.

Wine Tasting with Two Mile Wines A weekly wine tasting event. Saturday, Dec. 3, [illegible] days, 2-6 p.m. Continues through Dec. 31. free. 510-868-8715. TwoMileWines.com. The 25th Street Collective, 477 25th St., Oakland. 510-384-5418. 25thStreetCollective.com.

Rosé Permanente Open House With tastings of Rock Wall's entire wine selection, including new releases; snacks from Bistro Zaton and chocolates from Coco Tutti; live music, winery tours, and a holiday photo booth for festive photographs. Ages 21 and up. Sat., Dec. 3, 1-5 p.m. $20-$45. Rock Wall Wine Company, 2301 Monarch St., Ste. 300, Alameda. 510-522-5700. RockWallWines.com.

FARMERS' MARKETS

Alameda Farmers' Market With locally grown fruits and vegetables, plus family activities. For info, visit PCFMA.com. Tuesdays, 8:30 a.m.-1 p.m., free. Alameda Farmers' Market, Haight Ave. at Webster St., Alameda.

Bayfair Center Farmers' Market Fresh produce supplied by local organic and specialty farmers. Saturdays, 8 a.m.-1 p.m., free. Bayfair Center, 15555 E. 14th St., San Leandro. 510-357-6000. ShopBayfair.com.

Children's Hospital Farmers' Market TBT and WIC okay. On the web at PhatBeetsProduce.org. Tuesdays, 2-6 p.m. Children's Hospital & Research Center Oakland, 747 52nd St., Oakland.

Emeryville Farmers' Market With locally grown and produced fruit, vegetables, dairy products, flowers, wine, and more. Thursdays, 11:30 a.m.-3 p.m. Emeryville City Hall, 1333 Park Ave., Emeryville.

Farm Fresh Market Community Produce Stand Farm Fresh Choice runs produce stands in culturally diverse, limited-resource neighborhoods. Wednesdays, 3-5:30 p.m. 510-848-1704. EcologyCenter.org. Frances Albrier Community Center, San Pablo Park, 2800 Park St., Berkeley. 510-981-5150. CI.Berkeley.CA.US.

Fruitvale Farmers' Market With locally grown and produced fruit, vegetables, bread, products, and more. Sundays, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., free. 510-535-6900. Fruitvale Village, 3411 E. 12th St. (at Fruitvale BART). Farmers. 510-534-0908. UnityCouncil.org.

Grand Lake Farmers' Market Saturdays, 8 a.m.-2 p.m., free. 415-472-6100. Splash Pad Park, Grand Ave. and Lake Park Ave., Oakland. 510-238-7275. OaklandNet.com/Parks, Parks Default.asp.

Hayward City Hall Farmers' Market A farmers' market in the heart of Hayward. Saturdays, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Agriculturalinstitute.org.

Kaiser Permanente Hayward Farmers' Market With Market selling locally grown California produce at the main Alameda to the producer. Wednesdays, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., free. Kaiser Hayward, 27400 Hesperian Blvd., Hayward.

Kaiser Permanente Alameda Farmers' Market With vendors selling fresh organic fruits and vegetables. Fridays, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., free. Kaiser Oakland, 3801 Howe St., Oakland.

Kensington Farmers' Market With a seat, try fresh Market on organic chocolate, tree products, fresh wild fish, fruits and vegetables, nuts, butters, bread, Market fresh pasta, and seasonal programs. Sundays, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., free. Kensington FarmersMarket.org. Oakland. Open at the Colusa Circle, Kensington.

Laurel District Farmers' Market Sponsored and maintained by Oakland Food Connection. With certified organic produce from J&P Organic Farm and a youth-led products food stand called the Purple Lunch Café. For more info or to find out how to become involved please Market visit at TheOaklandCommunityCulture.org, or call 510-482-7800. Saturdays, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Laurel District Farmers' Market, 4173 MacArthur Blvd., Oakland.

Montclair Village Farmers' Market Featuring organic produce and prepared foods. Free parking in Village garage at the top of La Salle Avenue. Sundays, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Downtown Montclair Village, LaSalle and Moraga Aves., Oakland.

North Berkeley Farmers' Market Breads, specialty foods, all-organic produce, and more for sale, plus special programs and events. Thursdays, 3-7 p.m. free. 510-548-3333. EcologyCenter.org. Shattuck Ave. at Rose St., Berkeley.

Old Oakland Farmers' Market Features super-fresh seasonal produce, along with breads, nuts, organic foods and all sorts of [illegible] Fridays, 8 a.m.-2 p.m. free. Old Oakland Farmers' Market, 9th St., Oakland, Broadway and Clay St. Farmers. [illegible]

Pacific Coast Jack London Farmers' Market Seasonal Oakland, greens, nuts, freshly baked bread, pastries, cut flowers, specialty foods, plus Market live music, and arts and foods for kids. Sundays, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., free. Jack London Square, 5th Broadway, Oakland.

Richmond Farmers' Market Vendors sell seasonal produce, eggs, crafts, and apparel. Fridays, 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Richmond Farmers' Market, 24th St. & Barrett Ave., Richmond.

Richmond Farmer's Market Fresh, locally grown fruit, Market eggs, and other produce. Fridays, 8 a.m.-5 p.m. and Richmond Farmers' Market, 24th St. & Barrett Ave., Richmond.

Saturday Berkeley Farmers' Market Fresh and organic produce, breads, specialty foods, and more for sale, plus special programs and events. Saturdays, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., free. 510-548-3333. EcologyCenter.org. MLK Civic Center Park, 2151 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Berkeley. 510-981-5150. CI.Berkeley.CA.US/ContentDisplay.aspx?id=12778.

Temescal Farmers' Market California certified farmers offer seasonal produce direct. Fruits and nuts, fresh ranch eggs, baked goods, locally caught fish, fresh-cut Market and more. Info: 510-745-7100. Sundays, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., and DMV Parking Lot, 5300 Claremont Ave., Oakland.

Tuesday Berkeley Farmers' Market Fresh and organic produce, breads, specialty foods, and more for sale, plus special programs and events. Tuesdays, 2-7 p.m., and 510-548-3333. EcologyCenter.org. Derby St., at Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Berkeley. ●

Submissions for calendar listings should be e-mailed to Calendar@EastBayExpress.com or mailed to Calendar Editor, East Bay Express, 620 3rd St., Oakland, CA, 94607. Deadline is 14 days prior to the event date.

PICKS

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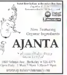
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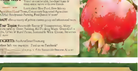
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A CLOCKWORK PORRIDGE

Hugo overcomes his difficulties. The sex addict in *Shame* comes over his difficulties.

By Kelly Vance

Asa Butterfield as Hugo and Chloë Moretz as Isabelle in Hugo

One of the first things a student of international film learns is the difference between Méliès and Lumière. The Lumière brothers, Auguste and Louis, are generally credited with inventing the modern concept of motion pictures, in about 1895. They used their cinematograph mostly as a documentary tool, to record scenes of everyday life. Fellow Frenchman and film pioneer Georges Méliès, on the other hand, envisioned the camera as a narrative device, and developed the idea of special effects and other technical tricks in order to tell whimsical, fantastic tales.

The key Lumière image is of a train simply pulling into a station in front of the camera — audiences screamed and tried to get out of the way, at least the first time they saw it. For Méliès, it's the shot from *Le voyage dans la lune* of the pie-faced Man in the Moon wincing with a rocket ship imbedded in his cheek — the audience howled with delight, and people are still laughing.

Méliès and his spirit of playful invention are at the center of Martin Scorsese's *Hugo*, the charming if overly gilded story of an unwanted teenage boy rescued by art and friendship. It's being promoted as Scorsese's very first children's film — and also as the filmmaker's first narrative feature in twelve years without Leonardo DiCaprio in it. But anyone can see that *Hugo* is only incidentally concerned with the actual lives of adolescents. Its real turf is the domain of the creator and his/her imagination, the land of the young at heart.

Fourteen-year-old English actor Asa Butterfield (the Nazi's son in *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*) plays the eponymous Parisian gamin with an orphaned expression on his face. He looks even more waif-like beside busy fourteen-year-old actress Chloë Grace Moretz, who has grown into young womanhood since the days (last year) of *Kick-Ass* and *Let Me In*.

Ever since the death of his father (Jude Law in flashback cameos), young Hugo has lived and worked inside the walls of an unnamed Paris train station, essentially forced into the job of maintaining the station's numerous wall clocks by his cruel Uncle Claude (Ray Winstone). Now the drunken Claude has gone missing, and poor Hugo clings to his shadowy occupation, somehow unbeknownst to everyone at the station, particularly the officious, foolish Inspector (Sacha Baron Cohen in a wonderful comical-menacing performance), who's inclined to put truants in a cage.

Hugo loves tending the clockworks and caring for a mysterious metallic figure, an automaton, which he believes his late father left him. One day, as Hugo tries to shoplift some candy from the toyshop in the station, the shopkeeper, a grim old man named Georges (Ben Kingsley), confiscates the boy's beloved notebook of mechanical diagrams, another paternal keepsake. In order to retrieve it, Hugo befriends the old man's goddaughter, the bright and inquisitive Isabelle (Moretz), and together they uncover some secrets — and that's as far as the synopsis should go without spoiling the plot.

Kingsley is properly grumpy/avuncular as fellow tinkerer Papa Georges, a nice match for his devoted wife Jeanne (Helen McCrory). Cohen's uniformed Inspector, a war veteran whose mechanical right leg continues the gears-and-cogs motif, brings some welcome slapstick to the project. That's Emily Mortimer hidden away as the Inspector's inamorata, Lisette the flower vendor. Moretz effortlessly outshines her male lead, so it's probably a defense mechanism to use her sparingly as Isabelle the family detective. At any rate, *Hugo* is not an actors' picture as much as it is a precious, lovingly tended tribute to the early days of film and the gentle souls like Hugo and Papa Georges who keep the flame.

Scorsese is one of our age's most renowned keepers of the cinematic flame. He salts the slender story with too many classic-film references to list (Harold Lloyd's *Safety Last*, Jean Renoir's *La bête humaine*, etc.) and provides 3D skeptics with one of the finest recent uses of that abused gimmick — the Inspector's angry face protruding alarmingly from the screen interrogating Hugo. Beside the gorgeous flashback vignettes of Méliès and his troupe filming their magic lantern shows — enough justification for any one movie — film preservation is the other thing this film is about. In that respect *Hugo* is the most beautiful public-service announcement of the season.

> **Hugo**
> Directed by Martin Scorsese. With Asa Butterfield and Ben Kingsley. Now playing.
>
> **Shame**
> Directed by Steve McQueen. With Michael Fassbender and Carey Mulligan. Opens Friday.

Michael Fassbender is busy. The German-born, Irish-bred international actor has four feature films released or about to be released in the US in 2011: *Jane Eyre* (as Rochester), *X-Men: First Class* (Magneto), the upcoming *A Dangerous Method* (psychoanalysis pioneer Carl Gustav Jung), and *Shame*. The latter is set to automatically become the most notorious because of its subject matter — it's the chronicle of a New York City sex addict — but in fundamental ways it's the weakest of the lot.

Director and art world sensation Steve McQueen (he made *Hunger* in 2008, also with Fassbender) and co-writer Abi Morgan fashion the everyday routine of office worker Brandon to be as hectic as possible, with extreme close-ups, urgent jump cuts, etc., except when Brandon takes drugs and the action slows to a drip. His life resembles that of one of those investment brokers we love to hate in topical "recession" dramas, only without the work — all he seems to do is pick up women in bars (including chanteuse Carey Mulligan), eye-grope women on the subway, masturbate to Internet porn, visit sex clubs, hire escorts, and so on.

None of this brings a smile to his face. In fact we can see he hates every minute of his empty, meaningless existence. If he didn't hate it, if he got a tremendous buzz tearing off outcall girls two at a time, he'd be totally unredeemable and thus unfit to be the subject of a major motion picture. It's a requirement of every "serious" social problem movie like *Shame* that guys like Brandon spend the time in which they're not tending to the needs of their penises looking dejected and reaching out, however feebly, for help.

Fassbender throws himself into Brandon's downward spiral with the same precision-masquerading-as-abandon he used in the silly costumers *Centurion* and *300*, which is to say even bad filmmakers get their money's worth from him. When the screenplay is good, Fassbender polishes it further. When the director has delusions of grandeur like McQueen and the story squishes where it walks, all anyone can do is play it through to the end. ●

Editor@EastBayExpress.com

MOVIES & THEATERS

To learn where a movie is playing, go to our website EastBayExpress.com or scan the QR code. Capsule reviews are written by Bethany Jean Clement (B.J.C.), Jen Graves (J.G.), Andrea Gronvall (A.G.), J.R. Jones (J.R.J.), Ben Sachs (B.S.), Amy Scott (A.S.), David Schmader (D.S.), Kelly Vance (K.V.), and Sam Worley (S.W.). For a schedule of repertory films, see One-Night Stands at the end of these listings. Please send info fourteen days before event date to Ellen.Cushing@eastbayexpress.com.

OPENING

Eames: The Architect and the Painter The husband-and-wife duo of Charles and Ray Eames was a sort of design, architecture, and decorating whirlwind for four decades of the mid-20th century, and Jason Cohn and Bill Jersey's [illegible] documentary shows why. The chairs, the pavilions, their funky warehouse office in Venice Beach, their [illegible] — it all gets covered, with talking-head testimony by their design staffers as well as by such admirers as filmmaker Paul Schrader. Narrated by James Franco. (84 min.) (K.V.)

Immortals Each new movie by Tarsem Singh (*The Fall*) has come to be an occasion for fans of extravagant visuals, and this energetic if [illegible] reimagining of the Greek myth of Theseus (Henry Cavill) doing battle with the evil King Hyperion (Mickey Rourke), [illegible] over the magical Epirus bow, is no exception. Before it dissolves into cheap-CGI overkill in the end going, [illegible] So does the lovely Freida Pinto as an oracular priestess. Screenplay by a quartet of [illegible], with Luke Evans as Zeus and Stephen Dorff as Theseus' sidekick Stavros. (110 min.) (K.V.)

The Man Nobody Knew: In Search of My Father, CIA Spymaster William Colby Subtitled "In Search of My Father, CIA Spymaster William Colby," this [illegible] affectionate documentary profile of filmmaker Carl Colby's father spends most of its time detailing the elder Colby's mission in Vietnam, including his sponsorship of the notorious assassination program Phoenix. He was publicly wrung out for that by numerous congressional hearings, which may have precipitated his eventual suicide in 1996. [illegible] Colby, a devout Catholic, apparently considered himself a "tortured soul" to have [illegible] so many deaths. But we can't pity him, even after the impressive array of talking heads — James Schlesinger, Donald Rumsfeld, and journalists Bob Woodward, Daniel Ellsberg, and Seymour Hersh, et al. — has had its say. Truth is, no one ever got close enough to Colby to really know him, not even his [illegible] widow, Barbara. Well-constructed, but in the end [illegible]. (110 min.) (K.V.)

Tomboy [illegible] Laure (played by Zoé Héran) and her younger sister move to a new neighborhood with their parents, and Laure immediately introduces herself to the local kids as a boy named Michael. That's the setup for Céline (*Water Lilies*) Sciamma's [illegible] character study. Young [illegible] Héran plays Laure/Michael with pure [illegible] and [illegible] Sciamma [illegible] as if it were a documentary on the budding of a new type of flower. That's [illegible], but it seems like the first episode of a TV mini-series rather than a stand-alone feature film. (82 min.) (K.V.)

ONGOING

Arthur Christmas Animated holiday family movie centering around Santa Claus' son, as he watches his father prepare for Christmas night. Directed by Sarah Smith, written by Smith and Peter Baynham, starring the voices of James McAvoy, Hugh Laurie, and Bill Nighy. (97 min.)

A Very Harold & Kumar 3D Christmas Surrealistic, in the agreeably stupid way. The former flatmates, now in their thirties (John Cho and Kal Penn), [illegible] predicament involving a Christmas tree, Harold's in-laws, Kumar's fixation on a waffle-making robot, some [illegible] gangsters, beer pong, an MTV special starring [illegible] Patrick Harris (also very funny).

Showtimes Online

Movie showtimes and online ticket-buying at EastBayExpress.com or by scanning the code below and more dope per square foot than in any two Cheech & Chong movies. More laughs than anything in the Hangover series, as well. Written by Jon Hurwitz and Hayden Schlossberg and directed by Todd Strauss-Schulson. (90 min.) (K.V.)

Courageous Christian police drama following four cops [illegible], a fellow comrade. Directed by Alex Kendrick, written by Alex Kendrick and Stephen Kendrick, starring Alex Kendrick, Ken Bevel, and Kevin Downes.

The Descendants A major triumph for both director Alexander Payne and actor George Clooney, who plays a well-off Hawaiian businessman who has big decisions to make after an accident leaves his wife in a coma. The emotional and [illegible] progress of "back-up parent" Matt King (Clooney) and his daughters is of a piece with the humane family [illegible] portraits of [illegible] [illegible] characters in *Sideways*, *About Schmidt*, and the rest of the Payne filmography. Like Preston Sturges, Payne is as infatuated with individual Americans as he is with the idea of being an American. Here expanded to take in Matt's native Hawaiian family background. Clooney turns in one of his finest performances, maybe his best, in tandem with terrific support by Shailene Woodley and Amara Miller as the daughters. The wistful, lovely, infatuated Hawaiian music is [illegible] perfect. Screenplay by Payne, Nat Faxon, and Jim Rash; adapted from a novel by Kaui Hart Hemmings. Fine supporting acting by Beau Bridges, [illegible] Lillard, and Robert Forster. Refreshing and invigorating, as an island breeze. (115 min.) (K.V.)

Happy Feet Two Sequel to the animated kids' movie, following the further adventures of a family of dancing penguins. Directed by George Miller; written by Miller, Gary Eck, Warren Coleman, and Paul Livingston; featuring the voices of Elijah Wood, Robin Williams, and Pink. (100 min.)

Hugo A Martin Scorsese children's movie, with all that implies. The [illegible] director doesn't have much of a feel for the lead character, an orphaned teenage boy who lives in the walls of a 1930s-era Paris train station, maintaining the station's clocks. Scorsese's main concern is young Hugo's (Asa Butterfield) relation to Papa Georges (Ben Kingsley), a grumpy shopkeeper who just might be the great early film [illegible] Georges Méliès, living out his life in obscurity. So *Hugo* isn't very much for kids. It's intended for cinema [illegible] like Scorsese, and for providing plenty of fuel for the [illegible] with [illegible] clips from [illegible] silent masterpieces, plus his own gorgeously rendered 3D impressions of a film-lover's Paris. Chloë Grace Moretz matters as Hugo's pal and interest, with nice character bits by the [illegible] British cast: Emily Mortimer, Christopher Lee, and Sacha Baron Cohen as the comically menacing station inspector. Screenplay by John Logan, [illegible] from the novel by Brian Selznick. (127 min.) (K.V.)

The Ides of March A high-class [illegible] [illegible] with a [illegible] cast is still a potboiler, even when it's cowritten and directed by George Clooney. Easier to look on it as a keenly entertaining, [illegible] parade, with [illegible] Ryan Gosling in the lead role as the press secretary of a liberal Democrat presidential candidate (Clooney) trying to cope with adversity leading up to the Ohio primary. Gosling's cold eyes have never been colder than as Stephen Meyers, the true climber who changes into a shark before our eyes and the eyes of fellow political animals Philip Seymour Hoffman, Paul Giamatti, Evan Rachel Wood, Marisa Tomei, and Jeffrey Wright. [illegible] strongly is [illegible]. A [illegible] lesser work of art in the Screenplay by Clooney, Grant Heslov, and Beau Willimon, adapted from Willimon's stage play. The strong cast and Clooney's smarmy-pol [illegible] notwithstanding, it's a bit of a soap opera. (101 min.) (K.V.)

In Time [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] Justin Timberlake into a future where time is the only currency. Everyone looks young and attractive, and people can live indefinitely, or not, depending on their [illegible]. Poor Justin Timberlake. The ninth-grade-writing-project [illegible] is by writer-director Andrew Niccol (*Lord of War*), and [illegible] Cillian Murphy as a "Timekeeper" cop, Amanda Seyfried as a rich man's daughter, and Vincent Kartheiser as the rich daddy. There's nothing quite as sad as a [illegible] [illegible] plot that fails to [illegible] itself with pretty faces and [illegible] manner. [illegible] should waste a minute of their life on this baloney. (109 min.) (K.V.)

Into the Abyss "Why does God allow capital punishment?" asks [illegible] Werner Herzog to the chaplain in the Texas prison where this documentary goes to visit death row inmates. [illegible] Master doc-maker Herzog (*Cave of Forgotten Dreams*, *Grizzly Man*) gets [illegible] astounding footage, interviewing jailbirds and a retired [illegible] who just couldn't take it anymore, but the [illegible] powerful mini-portrait in this disheartening film is [illegible]-Perry, a boyish convicted killer scheduled to die by lethal injection. He [illegible] [illegible] essentially for the keys to a red Camaro that left [illegible] [illegible]. Covers [illegible] the same ground as other death row rebels, but with the [illegible] of [illegible]. (107 min.) (K.V.)

J. Edgar Clint Eastwood's biographical study of FBI founder J. Edgar Hoover (bravely portrayed, [illegible] and all, by Leonardo DiCaprio) is a [illegible] ill-conceived [illegible]; the end of [illegible] that [illegible] you feel queasy as you leave the theater. As written for the screen by Dustin Lance Black (Oscar winner for his *Milk* screenplay), Hoover was simultaneously one of the most powerful men in the US [illegible] — and [illegible] a pouty mama's boy, an [illegible] bully whose vindictive [illegible] for "Reds," anti-war protesters, and African-American civil rights leaders like Martin Luther King Jr. may or may not have been a cover for his homosexual relationship with his chief lieutenant, FBI agent Clyde Tolson (Armie Hammer). But [illegible] from the smothering influence of Hoover's mother (Judi Dench), we learn [illegible] nothing about how his projections were formed, only the deadly consequences. Why [illegible] at all, even with a ten-foot pole? What was producer-director Eastwood thinking? And whose [illegible] idea [illegible] his [illegible] biography? [illegible] more questions than it answers. Costarring Naomi Watts as the woman the young Hoover [illegible] to warm up to. (137 min.) (K.V.)

Jack and Jill Adam Sandler vehicle starring the comedian as a successful [illegible] and father who is tormented by his needy twin sister [illegible], played by Sandler [illegible] come the holidays. [illegible] by Dennis Dugan; written by Ben Zook, Steve Koren, and Robert Smigel; [illegible] starring Katie Holmes and Al Pacino.

Like Crazy Delicate romantic drama [illegible] people to [illegible]. [illegible] Anton Yelchin (*Terminator Salvation*) and Felicity Jones (*The Tempest*), as an ill-starred pair of young lovers [illegible] and [illegible] Los Angeles and London, trying to fulfill their mingled amorous destinies. [illegible] Drake Doremus (*Douchebag*) obviously [illegible] such dialogue-heavy [illegible] of emotional [illegible], and even though it suffers slightly in comparison to the [illegible]*Sunrise* series, it's a definite step forward for all concerned. [illegible] [illegible] the screenplay with help from his *Douchebag* writer Ben York Jones, who also [illegible] it. [illegible] (90 min.) (K.V.)

Margin Call [illegible] the [illegible] 2008 Economic [illegible] drama and [illegible] far from the last, writer-director J.C. Chandor's debut feature [illegible] roughly from his sophisticated staring and dialogue — as a fictitious, [illegible] Wall Street investment firm is the first to go down in flames. Basically they [illegible] the guy who knew everything (Stanley Tucci) and now they're [illegible] each other. And not the [illegible] the $250K/year junior [illegible] really understands the business. The cast refers to the [illegible] Kevin Spacey, Jeremy Irons, Paul Bettany, Simon Baker, Demi Moore, and Zachary Quinto as Peter Sullivan, the "rocket scientist" who may be the only moral individual in the room. Quite an actor's derby. (109 min.) (K.V.)

Martha Marcy May Marlene A [illegible] young woman (strikingly portrayed by Elizabeth Olsen) escapes from a [illegible] Manson-Family-style cult in contemporary rural New York state and winds up in the home of her solicitous sister, but she has a tough time letting go. And the [illegible] mood gives the [illegible], unnervingly [illegible] [illegible]

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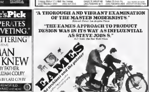

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let me getting under Martha's skin and staying there for the entire running time — [illegible] and [illegible] Sean Durkin see to that, with strong [illegible] from the reliable John Hawkes as Patrick, the cult's [illegible], Sarah Paulson and Hugh Dancy as Martha's sister and brother-in-law, and Julia Garner as a [illegible]. This stealth [illegible] [illegible] into [illegible] a [illegible] [illegible] from many [illegible] might wish to go, but it's worth the [illegible]. (120 min.) (K.V.)

Melancholia Lars von Trier's filmography has been a bumpy ride — pretentious, [illegible], awake to awake possibilities yet hampered by a deadening frailty. But the [illegible] wedded [illegible] drama takes the [illegible] to the [illegible] and its emotional impact as a [illegible] may well be his masterpiece. Conceived in the midst of the writer-director's bout with depression, it [illegible] happens to a [illegible] young woman named Justine (Kirsten Dunst in a career-defining performance), her [illegible] husband (Alexander Skarsgård), her sister (Charlotte Gainsbourg) and the sister's husband (Kiefer Sutherland) while they wait in a secluded villa for an approaching planet Melancholia, to [illegible] with Earth. It's not as much an allegory as a hallucination in the key of "von Trier" with some of most gorgeous [illegible] of his [illegible] wedded to [illegible] of Wagnerian [illegible]. Nothing von Trier has [illegible] approaches the gravity of this. (135 min.) (K.V.)

Midnight in Paris Owen Wilson's Woody Allen [illegible] matches up well with one of Allen's favorite literary scenarios in this charming "old [illegible]" [illegible] a dissatisfied Hollywood screenwriter (Wilson) on vacation in the title city with his [illegible] wife (Rachel McAdams) and her [illegible] friends, who magically escapes into a vision of 1920s "Lost Generation" Paris. Has the same nostalgia-drenched feel as *Paris Je T'Aime*, and also takes care to decorate its [illegible] [illegible] with nice performances by Marion Cotillard (as the Wilson character's flapper girlfriend), Kathy Bates (Gertrude Stein), and Adrien Brody, in cameo as Salvador Dali. (94 min.) (K.V.)

Moneyball [illegible] your typical baseball movie. [illegible] Bennett Miller's thoughtful screen [illegible] of [illegible] Lewis' [illegible] profile of Billy Beane and the 2002 [illegible]. It rightly pays much more attention to Beane's revolutionary baseball [illegible]/business model than to on-field heroics. In that respect it's more like *The Social Network* than *Field of Dreams*, which is a good thing. Brad Pitt, already [illegible] in [illegible] as Beane, with Jonah Hill as his [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible] and Philip Seymour Hoffman [illegible] Art Howe. *Moneyball* sells the [illegible], not the [illegible]. Screenplay by Steven Zaillian and [illegible] from a screen story by Stan Chervin, [illegible] from Lewis' bestseller. (133 min.) (K.V.)

The Muppets Kermit, Miss Piggy, Fozzie, Gonzo, the Swedish Chef, Animal, and the rest of the original Jim Henson [illegible] of wise-cracking, furry puppets return from a long [illegible] to set out on a [illegible] — rescue the Muppets [illegible] from the clutches of a greedy oil [illegible] (Chris Cooper). Little kids and anyone who remembers the Eighties will be suitably [illegible] [illegible] they're traditional-style puppets, not CGI, and the new songs by Bret McKenzie give them plenty to do. Anchoring the human side of the story are Amy Adams (parodying her own [illegible]) and *Forgetting Sarah Marshall* guy Jason Segel (the [illegible]). [illegible] cameos by everyone from Mickey Rooney to Ken "Mr. Chow" Jeong. Directed smartly by James Bobin. There's an extra [illegible] attraction in the theaters: Pixar's *Small Fry*, a [illegible] short about [illegible] Lightyear's [illegible] [illegible] fast-food giveaway toy. (102 min.) (K.V.)

The Muppets

My Week With Marilyn [illegible] coming of age in the behind-the-scenes [illegible] of Marilyn Monroe [illegible] (being directed by Laurence Olivier (Kenneth Branagh) in the [illegible] *The Prince and the Showgirl*, circa 1956 — as seen through the eyes of a [illegible] young assistant director named Colin Clark (Eddie Redmayne). [illegible] is genuinely good as vulnerable Marilyn and [illegible] too, as the [illegible] where if we can suspend our disbelief. Branagh is too [illegible] and [illegible] to play Olivier despite his perfect vocal impersonation. [illegible] as Vivien Leigh (huh?), Zoë Wanamaker as Marilyn's acting coach, and Dougray Scott as MM's playwright husband, Arthur Miller. She's [illegible]. Directed [illegible] by Simon Curtis. [illegible]. (99 min.) (K.V.)

Puss in Boots [illegible] animated Shrek spinoff about the title swashbuckling [illegible] (voice of Antonio Banderas) [illegible] with his female counterpart, Kitty Softpaws (Salma Hayek), and a [illegible] Humpty Dumpty (Zach Galifianakis) on the trail of the Goose That Laid the Golden Egg, won't keep anyone awake at night. Although DreamWorks' Chris Miller [illegible] a lot of [illegible] on the [illegible] and [illegible]. Aside from the "growing beanstalk" sequence the 3-D [illegible] is negligible and [illegible] Henry Jackman's music score [illegible]. Nothing new, nothing strange, [illegible] nothing unexpected. [illegible]. (90 min.) (K.V.)

The Skin I Live In Pedro Almodóvar's [illegible] movie since 2004's *Bad Education* is a [illegible], disconcertingly arty [illegible]-drenched [illegible] tale — with Antonio Banderas [illegible] as a [illegible] [illegible] in his Toledo laboratory, performing [illegible] experiments on his captive [illegible], a [illegible] young woman named Vera (Elena Anaya). What a [illegible] of [illegible] material can make. [illegible] adapted from a novel by French writer [illegible] Thierry Jonquet. The [illegible] story of Dr. Robert Ledgard's [illegible] [illegible]. His tableaux sparkle with dark mischief, and his supporting players [illegible] Marisa Paredes as the [illegible] housekeeper, Roberto Álamo as Zeca the Tiger Man, and Jan Cornet as a [illegible] — [illegible] with all the energy [illegible] from most of the director's middle-period efforts. Almodóvar [illegible]. Screenplay adaptation by Pedro and Agustín Almodóvar. (117 min.) (K.V.)

Tower Heist [illegible] Something from the [illegible] corner of the "[illegible]" [illegible]. In order to [illegible] justice from a Bernie-Madoff-style Wall Street investment swindler (Alan Alda), the [illegible] of [illegible] employees of the New York City [illegible] [illegible] the [illegible]. [illegible] — Ben Stiller, Casey Affleck, [illegible] Sidibe (of *Precious*), Matthew [illegible] — join forces with a two-bit [illegible] (Eddie Murphy) [illegible] to [illegible]. It's got obvious [illegible] lifted from *Big Deal on Madonna Street* and also [illegible] *Day Off* — [illegible] shows an [illegible] — and is good for one or two genuine laughs. [illegible] by Brett Ratner and [illegible]. (104 min.) (K.V.)

The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn Part 1 Third [illegible] of the widely popular Young Adult vampire series, [illegible] directed by Bill Condon, adapted by Melissa Rosenberg from the book of the same name by Stephenie Meyer, starring [illegible] Stewart, Robert Pattinson, and Taylor Lautner. (117 min.)

ONE-NIGHT STANDS

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 1

The Fall of the Romanov Dynasty (90 min., 1927) Silent with Russian intertitles, live English [illegible] and [illegible] on piano. [illegible] The [illegible] Cinema of [illegible] (Pacific Film Archive, Berkeley, 7:00)

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 2

Together (13 min., 2009) In Spanish with English subtitles. With an introduction by Robert Koehler and an appearance by writer/director Nicolás Pereda. Afterimage: The Films of Nicolás Pereda (PFA, 7:00)

Perpetuum Mobile (86 min., 2009) In Spanish with English subtitles. With an appearance by writer/director Nicolás Pereda. Afterimage: The Films of Nicolás Pereda (PFA, 8:45)

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 3

Summer of Goliath (76 min., 2010) In Spanish with English subtitles. Preceded by Interview with the Earth (18 min., 2008). With an appearance by writer/director Nicolás Pereda. Afterimage: The Films of Nicolás Pereda (PFA, 6:30)

Baby Doll (114 min., 1956) [illegible]: The American South in Cinema (PFA, 9:00)

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 4

All Things Were Now Overtaken by Silence (60 min., 2010) In Spanish with English subtitles. With an appearance by writer/director Nicolás Pereda. Afterimage: The Films of Nicolás Pereda (PFA, 4:00)

Where Are Their Stories? (73 min., 2007) In Spanish with English subtitles. Featuring [illegible] Robert Koehler and writer/director Nicolás Pereda in conversation (PFA, 5:00)

MONDAY, DECEMBER 5

[illegible] Gold [illegible] (48 min., 2011) Followed by a [illegible] with the [illegible] (Rialto Cinemas Cerrito, El Cerrito, 7:30)

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 6

[illegible] (120 min., 2011) National Theatre Live (RCC, 7:00)

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 7

The Trial (118 min., 1962) Jeanne Moreau: Enduring Allure (PFA, 7:00)

The Life of [illegible] — Episode 2: [illegible] (50 min., 1982) Preceded by potluck and social hour at 6:30 p.m., [illegible] by a discussion. [illegible] (Berkeley [illegible], 7:30)

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HOUSE OF MOON CANDY

A new house-music ensemble finds inspiration in soul and gospel

By Rachel Swan

Valerie Troutt.

Stephen Loewinsohn

The term "choir" doesn't sit well with Valerie Troutt, even though it seems apropos for her new nine-member vocal ensemble Moon Candy. Formed two years ago, the group specializes in house music — meaning, yes, that throbbing, hooky, disco-driven style of electronic music often associated with glowsticks and love parades and four-on-the-floor beats. Troutt has rendered it into a form that, in many ways, seems closer to gospel.

But she demurs. "When people see a bunch of black singers together they think 'Oh, it's a choir,'" she said while sitting in her East Oakland living room, half the band gathered around her. They nodded their heads in agreement. To her left sat Shamont Hussey and Selas E. Lalgee, plus Raul Perales, who plays electric bass in the backup band. (Unlike other house music acts, Moon Candy uses all live instrumentation.) To her right sat tenor singer Jovan Watkins. Most of them were brought up in choirs — Watkins leads his own gospel group; Hussey and Lalgee both sang in Oakland Youth Chorus as kids — but they insist that they're trying to do something a little less staid and regimented with Moon Candy.

To demonstrate, Troutt pulled out her phone and cued up a track, "Heartstrings." The phone made a tick-tock sound, hollow as a grandfather clock in an empty drawing room. A single piano note — a B-flat — thrummed in the background. Troutt waited for two bars, then started singing: *I saw you/Walkin' in the summery rain/Smmmilin'/Laughing at a lingering joke's refrain.* Her fellow singers joined in on the chorus, singing in three-part harmony: *You were pullin' on my heartstrings, weren't you/Pullin' on my heartstrings, weren't you?* Repetition of the same lyric over and over again made it sound like a looped sample — the kind you might hear burning through the speakers of a Chicago discotheque.

It did, indeed, sound like house music, albeit in barbershop-quartet form. About a minute into the song, the drum pattern shifted to more of an up-tempo dance beat. The singers nodded, swayed, and snapped their fingers, but kept their loop going. Eventually, the drums bled out, leaving the singers to do their last chorus a cappella.

To Troutt, it's a traditional spiritual medium that employs a lot of contemporary signifiers (like the vocal loops and the programmed drums). But no element is superficial. Even a lyric as simple as *You were pullin' on my heartstrings, weren't you?* has a deeper, more resonant meaning once it becomes an incantation. "Because that's a question you sometimes have to ask people over and over again," Troutt explained. "You were pulling on my heart strings, weren't you?" She phrases the lyric more as an accusation than a question, and punctuates it with a withering look.

Raised on gospel, soul, and R&B music, Troutt nonetheless feels a deep, almost atavistic connection to the house scene. She started listening to electronic dance music on commercial hip-hop stations in middle school and eventually got into bands like Incognito, a British acid jazz group that, she says, has a lot in common with the funk and disco acts from which house music generated. She can trace the whole lineage pretty easily on YouTube.

"Let me show you something," Troutt said, her eyes trained on the screen of a desktop computer in what could be called her home studio (essentially a small storage room adjacent to the kitchen). She pulled up a Walter Hawkins track — "Be Grateful" — from her iTunes library. "This is like house music a hundred percent, but it's arranged. It goes through this intro and everything." She clicked to a YouTube video of the Hawkins family performing the same tune live: the men in suits, the women in matching pink satin, a Hammond rippling in the background. "What do you hear?" Troutt asked. "Electric funk bass. B3 organ. So I always had that sound in my ear. Then I got introduced to cats like this —" she pulled up another video from St. Louis producer Osunlade, whose music combines electronic beats with R&B chord patterns and a distinctive spiritual cast. Osunlade is a Yoruba priest, and his adherence to African mysticism informs his artistic pursuits. Troutt finds that element appealing, especially since it reminds her of gospel. "He's doing things on kind of a more spiritual African deity kinda level," she explained.

Many aficionados would argue that you can find spiritual sustenance in the local house scene, too. Regular dance parties like "The People," "Evolve," and the now-defunct "Brothers and Sisters," have helped popularize a particularly soulful brand of electronic dance music in Oakland. Diverse crowds, trance-like beats, and an overall euphoric atmosphere give these parties the aspect of a church revival, even if the music itself is secular. It's no surprise, then, that many DJs use a kind of sermonic language to describe their art. To DJ Dedan, the spiritual connections seem obvious. "From dance, you get into a trance, right?" he asked. "That's where you get into spirituality." Troutt, who grew up in church and still feels strongly connected to her religious roots (given that her mother is a pastor), agrees that house music provides a similarly transcendent experience.

By training, Troutt is mostly a jazz vocalist. She studied at the New School for Jazz and Contemporary Music, spent some time gigging in New York, and did a residency at Red Poppy Art House a couple years after returning to the Bay Area. She writes tunes in odd meters and often uses abstract harmonies while keeping the melodies as lyrical and accessible as possible. She did a stint performing in the Cultural Heritage Choir with Linda Tillery, and launched Moon Candy shortly thereafter with the idea of recapturing the "congregational" format. She debuted the band at her 32nd birthday party before presenting it at Oakland Pride and San Francisco's Dance Mission Theater.

The original iteration had six members, including Hussey, Crystal Monee Hall, Kimiko Joy, Rashad Pridgen, and Troutt's cousin Erica Brown (who goes by the stage name Paulynn). The name Moon Candy came from a friend. In Troutt's words, "Moon Candy gets you high. But you don't have to snort it, or worry about getting a toothache."

Currently, the group has nine vocalists: Joy and Tiffany Martin on soprano; Hall, Troutt, Brown, and Sisira Shawn on alto; and Lalgee, Hussey, and Watkins on tenor and bass parts — plus a five-member backing band. With everyone together, the songs sound dense and richly textured: the harmonies more full, the lyrics more insistent. Drummer Ruth Price pounds a throbbing four-on-the-floor backbeat, while Perales provides funky rubber-band basslines. Troutt lets her singers improvise within the form — not to the extent of a jazz solo, but enough to give them a sense of freedom. That's what makes it spiritual, after all. ●

Rachel.Swan@EastBayExpress.com

Show Details
Moon Candy and DJ Dedan perform at Vitus (201 Broadway, Oakland) on Sunday, Dec. 4, 8:30 p.m., $10. VitusOakland.com

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ALIEN SYNTHS AND PRIMARY COLORS

Synths, politics, and tents in Oakland

By [illegible] Chen

Primary Colors

"At seventeen I hated punks and wanted to make alien music," said avowed contrarian Kevin Laird, now 31. "So we made synthesizer music, which was not well received. Synthesizers were unlikely to be viewed as anything but kind of kitschy and weak at the time." Lo these many years later, Laird can look back at the driving forces that set him on a musical path in the Nineties leading up to the here and now with Primary Colors. A veteran of West Coast bands (Beautiful Mutants, Hide and Go Freak, Sexual Big Bird), Laird took up with Michael Wood in 2009 and created this new spawn of "alien music": clanky, aggressive percussion over synth programming, all made using a four-track recorder as a live instrument. The Oakland duo may have escaped the idea that its music is weak or kitschy, but being a cult band presents a new set of challenges.

Both band members have roots in San Diego, although Wood, 24, did not find his way into the arts until arriving in the Bay Area. "For the most part, I was pretty removed from the San Diego music scene. I spent my high school years in East County playing in dingy metal bands that never played shows," he wrote in an email. "When I moved to San Diego proper, the only performances I did were solo synth sets that opened for noise shows. … The only shows I attended were a handful of noise performances during that period." As a solo performer, Wood also did modular synth "noise DJ" sets inside of tents in Oakland art spaces.

Though they have an odd-couple quality (Wood the reserved "straight man," Laird the excitable one), the group started out with a third wheel. The first few Primary Colors shows had Wood programming the noisy synth elements and Laird doing scrap metal percussion, with the addition of their friend Sweettooth on live film projections. Laird lives in a converted West Oakland church that houses Sweettooth's "Black Hole Cinema" film series. Though scheduling issues led to the projectionless version of the band, now Wood writes, "In my mind, our performances are always open to visual collaboration."

Laird occasionally plays with newly local Northwest transplant Joey Casio, and together they performed at the Frank Ogawa Plaza occupation before its first eviction. Even though Primary Colors wasn't one of the Occupy performers, Wood asserts that "many of our songs have loose political interpretations that come from a similar place as the Occupy movement as well as other political frames." Without claiming the tag of a "political band," which connotes fire-brand folkies, drum-circle jams, and didactic hardcore, the band members hint at a radical agenda when prodded. Laird cites the conservatism of the Nineties San Diego scene he came up in as another incentive to address larger themes. "The country was in much better shape economically, which was reflected in the kind of music people were interested in making. Ironically, in the Clinton era there were many more bands willing to speak to political concerns, and a much broader aesthetic and musical spectrum wedded to political lyrics and content."

That said, he had reservations about performing at the encampment. In addition to questions as to whether the Occupy generators could handle their power needs, Laird is quick to point out that there are other reasons not to perform in that context. "I am keenly into not over-privileging or overpromoting representations of white cultural forms at Occupy Oakland. I would rather encourage the entertainment organizers to bring in hip-hop talent, or speakers — Angela Davis was great — or the other endemic cultural forms we have around here."

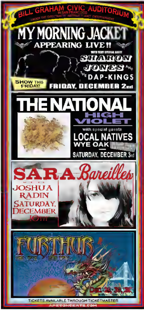
San Francisco label Dark Entries, which deals almost exclusively in obscure post-punk electronic reissues from the early Eighties, reached out to the band about a new release on vinyl. "It's pretty cool being on the same label as Neon Judgement and Dark Day," Laird wrote, assuring, however, that he and Wood don't want to seem like throwbacks. "We are definitely strongly influenced by this period in music, but I would be loathe to say we're purists about it."

The album in question is *Fading Collapse*, and it's surprisingly diverse. Wood even manages a Bryan Ferry-style vocal flutter on the title track. As far as influences go, the local tradition of Tuxedomoon or Factrix might get you closer, though many people would consider New York act Suicide to be a godfather of the entire genre. Babyland would be another reference point — inaccurate but in a neighboring vicinity. It would be another tip-off to point out that Primary Colors spent the summer touring with a relatively obscure synth act called Beauties, which would also qualify as comparison.

Show Details
At the Uptown (1928 Telegraph Ave., Oakland) on Wednesday, Nov. 30, 9:30 p.m. Free. UptownNightclub.com

The album is a local affair with engineering from Max Bretman (Stress Ape) and contributions from the aforementioned Joey Casio, Marissa Magic, and Vanessa Harris. It will be released on cassette by Oakland label Sanity Muffin before getting the vinyl treatment. It's also one of the last things recorded at the now-defunct 21 Grand, which adds to the romance — a clandestine project made in an abandoned space. Laird characterizes the band's "psychogeography" as a melding of two worlds: "Oakland music has an emphasis on the bass over the fast. It's cinder-block music. Southern California music is freeway music. Maybe our music is a synthesis of those two feelings." ●

Editor@EastBayExpress.com



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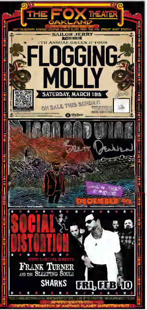

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CD REVIEWS

BETTER WITH CHEMISTRY

Military grade hip-hop, anguished R&B and a combo that clicks

Yelawolf

Radioactive

Radioactive begins with a sinister, cringeworthy introduction: an Apple-computer voice saying that the country is about to experience nuclear fallout. It's alarming. But under every military-grade outer shell is an equally soft underbelly, and if you don't want to be exposed to Yelawolf's, you'd be well advised to stick to the first half of *Radioactive*.

His first official release, *Radioactive* starts off just as promising as the Alabama rapper's tapes like last year's *Trunk Muzik*. He raps with the same whirlwind efficacy — a talent that's almost scary in its consistency. But this major-label debut doesn't achieve on the same level as *Trunk Muzik*.

You can tell initially by the cast of characters. *Trunk Muzik* mostly relied on the strength of Yelawolf's flow, with cameos from rap heroes like Bun B, Raekwon, and even Gucci Mane. The cast here is less exciting — Lil Jon, Kid Rock, and Eminem are some of the unlikely features. Eminem's verse on "Throw It Up" sounds good, but the song ends with a weird segue.

"This album needs a love song," Slim tells Yelawolf over the phone. Nevermind that he's wrong, but Yela seems confused, asking, "You mean like, for bitches?"

He's trying to be snide, but this confusion defines the rest of *Radioactive*. The hooks are anodyne compared to Yelawolf's razor-sharp style, and some of it is just sappy. It's certainly more club-friendly, and could be pared down into a DJ set to great effect. But minus a few standouts, the tracks that aren't produced by Yela's right-hand man WillPower aren't worth a listen. (Ghet-O-Vision, Shady Records, DGC, Interscope)

— Will Butler

Carl Thomas

Conquer

No single track on Carl Thomas' new album can quite measure up to the single, an old-fashioned love ballad called "Don't Kiss Me." That song shows Thomas' true talent, not only as a singer but also as a seducer. The combination of a luxuriant tenor and persuasive lyrics (Thomas gives his lover an ultimatum in the first verse) make it one of the most forceful songs on mainstream radio. It's enthralling.

That said, the rest of the album lacks real songcraft: the melodies are turgid, the production canned, the words often insipid. It's really held together by Thomas' voice, which is strong enough even to surpass the boringness of contemporary R&B. On "It Ain't Fair" he lends pain and palpable anguish to a song that's ultimately about a casual crush. On "The Night Is Yours" he trills, rolls, and otherwise ornaments lyrics that could have been filched from Olivia Newton-John. "Long Distance Love Affair" is the exception — it's bolstered by bouncy production to match the plaintive pitch in Thomas' voice, as he pleads with an absent (read: distant) lover. Literal, yes. But it's a relatable scenario, and Thomas is careful not to overdo the sentiment.

So what he really needs is a better production team and perhaps a ghostwriter. R&B auteur Andre Harris and smooth jazz kingpin Rex Rideout are the powerhouses behind this album, and although they both boast impressive CVs (Dre & Vidal and Ledisi, respectively), their penchant for slow jam beats and feathery string sections seems like an ill fit for Thomas. What this singer needs is a few church bells and a frivolous, soaring bridge — something to match the conviction in his voice. As he assures in "Don't Kiss Me," it's gotta be all or nothing. (Verve Forecast)

— Rachel Swan

Morgan Ågren/Henry Kaiser/
Trey Gunn

Invisible Rays

Improvised affairs can be, by their very nature, hit-or-miss. When the right combinations of players click it can be magical; at other times it can be great fun for the performers while just vaguely interesting or even downright tedious for the listener. Fortunately, chemistry and craftsmanship prevail in the new collaboration between Bay Area guitar wizard Henry Kaiser, King Crimson bassist Trey Gunn, and Mats/Morgan Band drummer Morgan Ågren. While these lads had never played together before, they find a fair amount of common ground. Kaiser is an old hand at free-improv situations (Derek Bailey, the Grateful Dead orbit). Gunn has been a member of King Crimson since 1994 and has recorded or performed with Tool, Brian Eno, and Puscifer. Swedish drummer Ågren co-leads the Mats/Morgan Band and has worked with Zappa's Universe tribute band, among others.

Far from an inharmonious din, *Invisible Rays* has lots of focused and emotive playing. The 22-minute title track lurches ominously and aggressively as Kaiser's six-strings seethe amid Ågren's tempestuous bashing. "Where Is Juan?" has an oddly pensive quality and a searing slow-burning, blues-hinted solo by Kaiser, the sustain taking on a vocal quality. "The Secret Handshake with Danger" begins with some lilting, brooding acoustic rural blues guitar before mutating into a nightmarish, drum-and-bass-propelled dreamscape. *Invisible* isn't easy listening, nor is it musicianly masturbation — there's no verse-chorus-verse structure here. It features vivid, dynamic playing from the trio, who play as a cohesive unit throughout, fashioning a bracing experience out of nothing. (7d Media)

— Mark Keresman

LOCAL LICKS

BY RACHEL SWAN

The Meat Sluts

"Cut That Rug"/"My Baby Is a Ding Dong"

These tracks come as two sides of a seven-inch, but you can also find them on the Meat Sluts' Facebook page, along with nine equally enjoyable, nearly humorous, uptempo rockabilly ditties. "My Baby Is a Ding Dong" is a Jerry Lee Lewis-style dance number. "Cut That Rug" is gleeful, scabrous punk. Frontwomen "TB Rumproast" and "Filet O' Nettie" don't so much sing as snarl, but their style befits the "Meat Slut" moniker. (self-released)

Sister Grizzly

On Nights Like This

It's hard to resist Robert Smith comparisons when Tom Gregor mimics Smith's intonation so slavishly. That said, Sister Grizzly is a rock duo worth checking out, if only because it does "emo" with such palpable intent. True to the form, *On Nights Like This* thrives on insistent, joyless lyrics and zig-zag song structures. Most tunes on this album defy the traditional verse-chorus rule, preferring to leap from one melodic idea to the next. (self-released)

Felsen

Breaking Up with Loneliness

Felsen is an emo band with a sense of humor, which should be a contradiction in terms. But Felsen fully embraces its sonal timbre, with sad bastard rock harmonies and lyrics that are almost always delivered in a beseeching tone. And even if the individual songs sound sprightly, the band still hews unerringly to its theme. There's even a lovely if cloying country ballad called "Take Me Back," which combines slide guitar and organ. (Ninth Street Opus)

At The Starry Plough Pub (3101 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley) on Friday, Dec. 9, 9 p.m. $5.

Stephanie Crawford

Live at the Jazzschool in Berkeley

Nearly two decades have passed since jazz vocalist Stephanie Crawford snagged the prestigious Django D'Or Award in France. If anything, she's gotten better with time, adopting a tone so deep, refined, and regal as late-career Betty Carter. Creative phrasing and imaginative tune selection distinguish this album from most you'll find on the local jazz market — "But Beautiful" seems to be the only well known standard on her setlist. "The Nightingale" is still her standout tune. (self-released) ●

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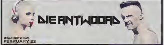

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CONCERTS & CLUBS

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EAST BAY

Blues, Folk & Country

Frank Solivan & Dirty Kitchen Freight & Salvage Coffeehouse, 8 p.m. $20.50, $22.50

Whiskerman with Cash Pony, Red Deep Apollo, Starry Plough, 8 p.m. $8-$10

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

Mils Yoshi's Oakland, 8 p.m. $35

Red Dibble Dinner jazz with guest chanteuse singers, The Alley, 9 p.m., free

Skip Henderson and [illegible] Quinn's Lighthouse, 8 p.m., free

Rock & Pop

[illegible] Carnivale A Mid-Winter Masquerade, a celebration of dark fantasy, The [illegible], 8 p.m. $15

Dave Hanley piano covers of classics, oldies, jazz, & pop, Pete's Restaurant, 8 p.m., free

El [illegible] plays Happy [illegible] [illegible], 5 p.m., free

[illegible] with Desert Mix, Trails And Ways, Stairway Junkies, and Squeaky Toaster, Stork Club, 8 p.m., $5

Manthony with Rekkoner Young, Fan Theater, 8 p.m.

Red Magik with Old Salty, Greg Bowring, and Rosalie Wyse, [illegible] Bliss Cafe, 7 p.m., donations accepted

The Spazmatics Tom's Irish Sports Bar, 10 p.m., free

Trails and Ways Stork Club, 8 p.m., $5

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

Tom Dash trio with Ray Cholan and Martin Leone, The New Parish, 10 p.m., $20, $25

World, Latin, Reggae & Reggaeton

2 Radios with Analog Research Group, Ashkenaz, 8 p.m., $10

SAN FRANCISCO

Blues, Folk & Country

Mani CD release show, [illegible], 8 & 10 p.m. $15

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

Ann [illegible] Trio live jazz, Ana Mandara, 7:30-11 p.m., free

[illegible] with guests, Yoshi's San Francisco, 6-9 p.m., free

George [illegible] Solo, [illegible], 9:30 p.m.

The [illegible] Le Colonial, 7-10 p.m., free

[illegible] performs hot jazz and blues, Top of the Mark, 7:30-11:30 p.m., $10

Rock & Pop

[illegible] with [illegible] To The Grateful Dead [illegible], 8 p.m., $6

The Love [illegible] The [illegible], 7 p.m.

Olga with Left Space Down and [illegible], Bottom of the Hill, 8 p.m., $20

The Fooles with P. Willing James, Hotel Utah, 9 p.m., $8

Priscilla Ahn Slim's, 8 p.m. $15, $17

Siddhartha with Swahili Blonde, Lara [illegible] and Few plane Agents, Lab du Nord, 8:30 p.m. $10

[illegible] featuring [illegible] & The Future Funk, 100%, [illegible], The Barricades and more, [illegible] Lounge, 7 p.m. $40, $75 VIP

[illegible] with Built To Spill, The Fillmore, 8 p.m. $35

The [illegible] one of four nights, performing four different albums, The Independent, 8 p.m. $17

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

[illegible] with Carrie [illegible], Brick & Mortar Music Hall, 8 p.m. $15, $20

World, Latin, Reggae & Reggaeton

Red 4 Las Vibes [illegible], 9:30 p.m., free

[illegible] Thursdays a flamenco music & dancing with [illegible], [illegible], 8 p.m. $12

FRIDAY 2

EAST BAY

Blues, Folk & Country

First Friday Follies burlesque night with MC Juicy D Light and live music, Stork Club, 9 p.m., free

[illegible] & her Woodsmoke Band Freight & Salvage Coffeehouse, 8 p.m. $20.50, $22.50

[illegible] Rhythmix Cultural Works, 8 p.m. $15, $20

Classical & Opera

Audrey Vardanega Piedmont Piano Company, 8 p.m. $15

Experimental & Avant-Garde

Six Legged Crawlers [illegible] Theatre, 10 p.m., free

Holiday Music

[illegible] Messiah presented by The Pacific Chamber Symphony under the direction [illegible] Theatre, 8 p.m.

A Johnny Mathis Christmas playing his greatest hits and holiday classics with a symphony orchestra, Paramount Theatre, 8 p.m. $59.50-$89.50

Oakland East Bay Gay Men's Chorus Presents: "Pieces" Clayton Valley Presbyterian Church, 8 p.m. $12-$20

Jonathan Richman plays San Francisco's Great American Music Hall on 12/7

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

David Bradford: A Retrospective Joyce Gordon Gallery, 8 p.m., free

[illegible] [illegible], 8 p.m., free

Red Dibble dinner jazz with piano cabaret singers, The Alley, 9 p.m., free

Rock & Pop

[illegible] with Cop Sound and The New Thoreau's, Shattuck Down Low, 7:30 p.m., free

Dave Hanley piano covers of classics, oldies, jazz, & pop, Pete's Restaurant, 8 p.m., free

The [illegible] with [illegible], The New Parish, 9 p.m., $10, $12

[illegible] [illegible], 8 p.m., $5

[illegible] with [illegible], Starry Plough, 9:30 p.m., $7, $10

[illegible] Bliss Cafe, 7 p.m., donations accepted

Vip with [illegible], Sometime At Sea, [illegible], and Steel Table, The Uptown, 9 p.m., free

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

Lalah Hathaway Yoshi's Oakland, 8 & 10 p.m. $26, $30

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[illegible] with Black Sea [illegible] lessons at 8 p.m., Ashkenaz, 9 p.m., $15

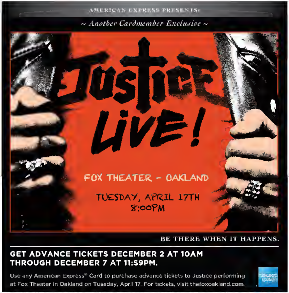
SAN FRANCISCO

Blues, Folk & Country

[illegible] [illegible] Restaurant, 8 p.m. onward, free

[illegible] & The Night Cabs [illegible], 9 p.m. $20

The National plays San Francisco's Bill Graham Civic Auditorium on 12/3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THU 12/8 9:00 pm $10
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FRI 12/9 9:00 pm $12
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PICKS

Cass McCombs

H[illegible] is lurking in the Bay Area more often than not, but we'd never let on. Cass McCombs has developed a reputation for being both exceptionally enigmatic and actually nomadic. That's the first of many reasons you should catch this mysterious songwriter performing live when the opportunity arises. Considering his lifestyle, McCombs is rather prolific. He released two full-length albums in 2011, *Wit's End* and *Humor Risk*, both of which were thoughtful and divergent additions to his always-evolving body of work. McCombs writes about subjects that are inherently dark (he's a bit obsessed with death, as are many great scribes) with a subtle, shifty sense of humor. Poetically, his sad-jester persona benefits from a thorough wash of American songwriting processes; he probably hates the word "timeless," though it is often used by those trying to pin down his sound. In interviews, he's cynical but erudite, a commentator for the ages, maintaining the distance needed to appreciate his music without the inflection of his own personality. He appears at the Great American Music Hall (859 O'Farrell St., San Francisco) on Sunday, Dec. 4, 8 p.m. $16. GAMH.com *— Will Butler*

Cass McCombs.

Melford/Amendola/Goldberg/Shifflet

A jazz supergroup quartet by all measures, Melford/Amendola/Goldberg/Shifflet includes four jazz musicians who, despite being leaders in their own right, are all known for their flexibility. Myra Melford's Be Bread sextet plays original compositions that defy all formal constraints; instead, Melford encourages her fellow musicians to improvise for long stretches while she sits quietly at the piano. Ben Goldberg, a clarinetist, leads many experimental combos, including the music of Brainchild, which specializes in spontaneous music — meaning he walks up to individual band members and whispers instructions in their ears. Scott Amendola is one of the best jazz drummers around, but he also plays in a lot of noise and "improv" acts that privilege sound over melody. John Shifflet has played bass in several of Amendola's bands, so he's well accustomed to an ever-shifting rhythm section. Though they've all played together in many permutations, these musicians have never appeared as a quartet. If you fancy a leaderless movement, look no further. At Freight & Salvage (2020 Addison St., Berkeley) on Sunday, Dec. 4, 8 p.m., $20.50-$28.50. FreightandSalvage.org *— Rachel Swan*

Morrissey

Morrissey

Is there a more fetishized act than the man born Steven Patrick Morrissey? He's a totemic figure in the Britpop movement. A 2002 *NME* poll found him ranking higher than even the Beatles as the most influential artist ever. His legacy has inspired a devoted Latino fan base, owing perhaps to Morrissey's Irish-immigrant roots. (Apparently, the experience of Irish immigrants in England resembles that of Latinos in the US.) Otherwise, credit goes to the man's droll sense of humor, the enormous popularity of his former band The Smiths, or an outrageous outspokenness that's made him everything from a pro-vegan celebrity activist to a right-leaning white supremacist. At the end of the day though, it's all about his solo catalogue, which careens from the inherently jingoistic "Irish Blood, English Heart" to the cheeky anti-Thatcher diatribe "Margaret on the Guillotine." And while he's shown outright disdain towards the idea of a much-clamored-for Smiths reunion, Morrissey isn't averse to visiting his ex-group's canon. For this week's swing through the Bay Area, Moz will trot out a combination of Smiths tunes ("Meat Is Murder," "I Know It's Over") and solo gems ("Everyday Is Like Sunday," "You're the One for Me Fatty") at the Fox Theater (1807 Telegraph Ave., Oakland) on Thursday, Dec. 1, 8 p.m., $49.50-$75. TheFoxOakland.com *— Dave Gil de Rubio*

My Morning Jacket

As classic rock 'n' roll performers go, Jim James and Sharon Jones are at the top of the field. James fronts *My Morning Jacket*, a band whose live shows have become famous not only for their high energy and theatrics, but for the lead singer's ability to turn inward and get intimate. He comes off as a regular guy who just so happens to have an angel's set of pipes. My Morning Jacket is currently on tour to support its sixth studio album, *Circuital*, which was released earlier this year. Opening act Sharon Jones and the Dap-Kings should be a nice counterpoint. Though Jones is well into her fifties, her verve is boundless. She's got a voice that honors Aretha as much as it does James Brown, and with the funk and soul perfectionists from Daptone Records (who also backed up Amy Winehouse) at her back, she never misses. At Bill Graham Civic Auditorium (99 Grove St., San Francisco) on Friday, Dec. 2, 7:30 p.m., $45. APEConcerts.com *— Will*

The Stairwell Sisters

The Stairwell Sisters actually did start with rhythm guitarist Sue Sandlin and dobro ace Lisa Berman singing in a stairwell, but the Bay Area–based quintet — banjo player Evie Ladin, bassist Martha Hawthorne, and fiddler Stephanie Prausnitz are the other Sisters — is now considered one of the top old-time string bands in the world. Their blend of folk, bluegrass, and world music influences twists the music into odd new shapes, but they remain rooted by their love of traditional music and their compelling, old-fashioned harmonies. They're also first-rate clog dancers and their a cappella tunes will leave you breathless. At St. Cyprian's Church (2097 Turk St., San Francisco) on Friday, Dec. 2, 7:30 p.m., $18-$20. NoeValleyMusicSeries.com *— j. poet*

Sharon Jones.

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C&C

Ann Richshaw Trio live jazz. Ann Richshaw. 8:30 p.m., free
Steve Gordon Jazz Orchestra Top of the Mark, 5 p.m., $10
Don Prell's SeaBop Ensemble Bird & Beckett Books & Records, 5:30-8 p.m., free
Emilio Pasternak Duo with guests, Yoshi's San Francisco, 8-11 p.m., free
George Cortez Scott Oakland, 8:30 p.m.

Rock & Pop

Allen Clapp and His Orchestra with John Moremen's Flotation Device (Mystery Lewis) and the Jigsaw Seen, Hotel Utah, 9 p.m., $10
Brandy Eye with Black Bat Revelation, The Warfield, 9 p.m., $40, $50
Steve Stone Tribute with Lovefool and the Band. Stone, 9 p.m., $14
Bar with Kapt Ricelle, Don P And The Books, and Overtones, Center of the Hill, 5 p.m., $8
JTA with Oppressed Logic, Hightower, and Psychology Of Genocide, Time Pastele, 9 p.m., $10
Los Lobos The Fillmore, 5 p.m., $48.50
The Mallard with The Bell, White Owl, and Upside Down Rickshaw Stop, 8 p.m., $11-$12
Ms. Oakland, Center with Sharon Jones & The Dap-Kings, Bill Graham Civic Center, 7:30 p.m., $45
Rock 48 with Toughskins, Harrington

Saints, and Sydney Dunks, Shattuck Tavern, 9:30 p.m., $7
Stag Nob Hill Masonic Center, 8 p.m., $58.50
The Weathermen one of four nights, ... Oakland Weather, The Independent, 8 p.m., $17

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

New Oakland Sessions with Candle ... Brick & Mortar Music Hall, 9 p.m., $15, $20

SATURDAY 3

EAST BAY

Blues, Folk & Country

Lisa Williamson Freight & Salvage Coffeehouse, 8 p.m., $22.50, $24.50
East Bay Honky-Tonk DJ ... Stone spins classic country, Merle ... honky-tonk blues, & more. The Oakland Lounge, 10 p.m., free
Jeffrey Oakland and the Oakland Armando's, 8 p.m., $15
Stone Stars Orchestra Boogie featuring J.C. Flyer, The Cowboy Gypsy Band (with Karl ...) and the Gary ... Band, Starry Plough, 8 p.m., $8-$10

Classical & Opera

Of Guitar And Candlelight presented by the Valley Concert Chorale, Trinity Lutheran Church of Pleasanton, 8 p.m.

Experimental & Avant Garde

Lisa Mezzacappa & Nightshade Trio Chapel, 8 p.m., $15, $10

Gospel & Vocal

Oakland Interfaith Gospel Choir Holiday ... Paramount Theatre, 1:30 p.m., $10-$40

Holiday Music

Oakland East Bay Gay Men's Chorus: "Potluck" Lake Merritt United Methodist Church, 2 & 7:30 p.m., $17, $20

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

Joey & Joy Tonic of Joy, 5:30 p.m., free
The Jazz Nutcracker with Terry Disley and friends, Musically Minded Academy, 1 p.m., $8-$12
Piedmont Pearls Taproom, Radio Company, 5 p.m., $15
Dee Ulrich dinner jazz with guest, The Alley, 5 p.m., free

Kids

Los Amiguitos de La Bahía Gary Lapow

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924 Gilman 924 Gilman St., Berkeley, 510-524-8180
Air Bar & Lounge 492 9th St., Lower Patio, Oakland, 510-444-2371
Albatross Pub 1822 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley, 510-843-2473
The Alley 3325 Grand Ave., Oakland, 510-444-8505
Amoeba Music 2455 Telegraph Ave., Berkeley, 510-549-1125
Armando's 707 Marina Vista Ave., Martinez, 925-228-8985
Art House Gallery & Cultural Center 2905 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley, 510-472-3170
Ashkenaz 1317 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley, 510-525-5054
The Baltic 135 Park Pl., Point Richmond, 510-237-1000
Bench and Bar 510 17th St., Oakland, 510-444-2266
Frank Bette Center for the Arts 1601 Paru St., Alameda, 510-523-6957
The Bistro 1001 B St., Hayward, 510-886-8525
Cafe Van Kleef 1621 Telegraph Ave., Oakland, 510-763-7711
Caffe Trieste 2500 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley, 510-548-5198
Chapel of the Chimes 4499 Piedmont Ave., Oakland, 510-654-0123
Cafe 1225 1225 Park St., Walnut Creek, 925-938-4567
Cafe 24 2111 Franklin St., Oakland, 510-268-8475
Cato's Ale House 3891 Piedmont Ave., Oakland, 510-655-3349
Coffee Mill 3363 Grand Ave., Oakland, 510-465-4224
Connie's Lounge 5472 College Ave., Oakland, 510-653-1588
Crogan's Sports Bar 1524 Civic Dr., Walnut Creek, 925-932-1391
Dalia's Gallery 341 14th St., Oakland, 510-893-8111
Eagles Hall 2305 Alameda Ave., Alameda, 510-865-0260
Easy Lounge 3255 Lakeshore Ave., Oakland, 510-338-4013
Eli's Mile High Club 3629 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Oakland, 510-594-0800
Era Art Bar and Lounge 19 Grand Ave., Oakland, 510-832-4400
Fenton & Jones Broadway 320 Broadway, Oakland, 510-663-1357
First Congregational Church 2345 Channing Way, Berkeley, 510-848-3696
First Presbyterian Church 2619 Broadway, Oakland, 510-444-3555
Fox Oakland 1807 Telegraph Ave., Oakland, 510-548-3010
Fever 111 W. Tennyson Rd., Hayward, 510-783-1100
Freight & Salvage 2020 Addison St., Berkeley, 510-644-2020
Hertz Hall UC Berkeley, Bancroft Way at College Ave., Berkeley, 510-642-9988
High Street Station 1303 High St., Alameda, 510-995-8045
Juanita's Paradise Club 1436 Oakland St., Alameda, 510-865-2225
Jupiter 2181 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley, 510-843-8277
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Nomad Cafe 6500 Shattuck Ave., Oakland, 510-595-5344
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Peter's Restaurant 32 Lafayette Cir., Lafayette, 925-284-1111
Piedmont Center for the Arts 801 Magnolia Ave., Piedmont, PiedmontCenterfortheArts.org
Piedmont Piano Company 1728 San Pablo Ave., Oakland, 510-547-8188
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Rhythmix Cultural Works 2513 Blanding Ave., Alameda, 510-865-5060
Rickshaw Saloon 3550 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette, 925-284-4811
Patrick's Fountain 1700 Clement Ave., Alameda, 510-331-6290
Ruby Room 132 14th St., Oakland, 510-444-7224
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Subterranean Art House 2179 Bancroft Way, Berkeley, 510-984-1201
Strike Zone 1450 E. 14th St., San Leandro, 510-352-8880
Uptown 1928 Telegraph Ave., Oakland, 510-451-8100
Vinnie's Bar & Grill 2045 Mt. Diablo St., Concord, 925-687-9515
Vitus 201 Broadway, Oakland, 510-452-1120
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Zza's Trattoria 552 Grand Ave., Oakland, 510-839-9124

C&C

Reverend, show with live music. La Peña Cultural Center. 10:30 a.m., $6, kids $5

Rock & Pop

Boco Hosley piano covers of classics, ethers, jazz, & pop, Pete's Restaurant, 9 p.m., free

Go and Sagh Blues Velvete 9:30 p.m., and

Mousemovers with Landlord and Acid Fest. 1-2-3-4 Go! Records, 7:30 p.m., $5

Hot Lunch with Cotton Mellon and Skystone. The Uptown, 9 p.m., $6

Mournful Congregation with Aldebaran, Laudanum, Lycus, and Anhedonist, Oakland Metro Operahouse, 8 p.m., $6

Sabertooth Zombie with Stew Like Iron, Secret People, Holy Rever, and Come, 924 Gilman, 8 p.m., $8

Three Steps Three with Your Idols and Monster Ships, 11 p.m., $6

Uslo Alama with Antsy Mensk And The Depressives, The Kinds, Tulie Toss, and My Parade, Stork Club, 9 p.m., $6

Webb Sisters, with Pink Films, World Beat Café, 7 p.m., donations accepted

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

Ol Dall D Dorsey's Locker, 9 p.m., free

Lelah Abdullah Yoshi's Oakland, 8 & 10 p.m., $26, $30

World, Latin, Reggae & Reggaetón

Boca de Rio CD release, Yoshi, 8 p.m., $5

Gamelan Sari Raras Gamelan music and dance, Hertz Hall, 8 p.m., $5-$15

Kaloja with Abasa Brothers, Ashkenaz, 9 p.m., $15, $13

SAN FRANCISCO

Blues, Folk & Country

Earnest Enef Bogpatch Saloon, 9:11 p.m., and

Karen Lovely Biscuits & Blues, 8 & 10 p.m., $20

Misdizzolo di Medaso Italian folk music with Bleet Mignano, Caffe Trieste, 10:30 a.m.-12-15 p.m., free

Classical & Opera

Pacifika! A Candlelight Christmas San Francisco Bach Choir with Katherine Growdon, mezzo-soprano and the SFBC Baroque Ensemble, Calvary Presbyterian Church, 8 p.m., $15-$35

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

Main Attrakionz plays The New Parish on 12/7

Aza Shannon Trio live jazz, Jazz and Redwood, 6-11:30 p.m., free

Eddie Pasternak Duo with guests, Yoshi's San Francisco, 8-9 p.m., free

Howard Wiedcrald Scott Howard, 9:30 p.m.

Rock & Pop

Jay Bay Rowed featuring Weekend, Sleepy Sun, Extra Classic, Tony Molle, and unlimited beer tasting, Verdi Club, 2 p.m., $45, $55

Gamelan with Rahel Eats, Halo Howard, and Dragonweather, Soli/Mission Gallery, 8:30 p.m., $8

Dead by 4th CB Howard, with Bonnets, Stretchers, and Allen, Thee Parkside, 9 p.m., $12

Digital Tapu Machine with Gloryday, Aly Boy Knox, and Swenge Arrangement, Riders, 9 p.m., $15

The Corridor Band Cafe du Nord, 9:30 p.m., $12

Aftershocks at Bio, 9 p.m., $12

Jake Shimabukuro The Warfield, 8 p.m.

and Redwood with Local Howard and Wye Oak, Bill Graham Civic Auditorium, 7:30 p.m., $42.50

Pepperoni Rickshaw Stop, 9 p.m., $10, $12

Shannon & and Hiatus with Mikal Cronin and Pangea, Hi Ro, 10 p.m., $8

Slouching Signs with Sorry Ever After and Primitive Hearts, The Knockout, 5:30 p.m., $6

Tijuana Panthers with The Shells and Melted Toys, Westside of the Hill, 10 p.m., $12

and Housemovers one of five nights, performing four different Howard, The Independent, 8 p.m., $12

and Shannon Matt with Miracle Volante and Moe Bloom (Blessing Sail), Bead Clash, 9 p.m., $10

Her Majesty with Ears! Ears! and Parents, Hemlock Tavern, 9:30 p.m., $6

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

New Orleans Suspects with Connie Bauxbum, Brick & Mortar Music Hall, 9 p.m., $15, $20

Saturday Night Soul Party with DJs Lucky Paul Paul and Phengton Ronald, Elbo Room, 10 p.m., $5-$10

SUNDAY 4

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Thurs. Dec 8, 10:30pm JOSE JAMES BAND	Fri-Sun. Dec 9-11 MIKE STERN w/ RICHARD BONA, DAVE WECKL
Fri. Dec 9 SAN FRANCISCO STATE UNIVERSITY GOSPEL CHOIR	Mon-Tues. Dec 12-13 MARIANNE FAITHFULL
Sat-Sun. Dec 10-11 HIROSHIMA CHRISTMAS	Wed. Dec 14 LARRY GOLDINGS ORGAN TRIO feat. PETER BERNSTEIN & BILL STEWART
Mon. Dec 12 ROBERTA DONNAY JASS ENSEMBLE + CHELLE! & FRIENDS	Thurs. Dec 15 Windham Hill Winter Solstice Celebration feat. BARBARA HIGBIE LIZ STORY & LISA LYNNE
Tues. Dec 13 DESTINY MUHAMMED JAZZ TRIO + A VICTORIA THEODORE CHRISTMAS	Fri-Sat. Dec 16-17 SPYRO GYRA
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SON DE LA BAHIA
FRI 12/2
Here Son de la Bahia performs classic Cuban material including the Son Danzon & Boleros. Featuring Tito Ramsey (bass), Gabriel Navarro (guitar, tres) & Patricia Angulo (congas, percussion). Son de la Bahia will transport you back to Cuba a la the Buena Vista Social Club.
oyeproductions.com

CITIZENS JAZZ
SAT 12/3
Here Citizens Jazz is a collective of some of the most talented & passionate jazz musicians in the Bay Area. Led by bassist Caroline Chung, the concept was devised from the creativity of the many wonderful musicians she has met & play with. Each combo brings in a different flavor to the collective while maintaining the integrity of be bop, swing & blues from the good ole' days!
myspace.com/citizensjazz

C&C

EAST BAY

Blues, Folk & Country

Revolution Unplugged Jupiter, 5 p.m. free

Jimmy's All-Star Super Oakland Blues, bells + different blues band every week, Pete's Restaurant, 5 p.m., free

Myra Melford with Ben Goldberg, Renee Amendola, and John Shifflett, Freight & Salvage Coffeehouse, 8 p.m., $22.50-$24.50

Classical & Opera

Of Carols And Candlelight presented by the Valley Concert Chorale, First Presbyterian Church of Livermore, 3 p.m.

Takács Quartet Presents Presenting works by Dvořák and Haydn (on Nov. 4) and Janáček, Britten [illegible] (Dec. 4 and Feb. 19), Hertz Hall, 3 p.m., $00

Holiday Music

Oakland East Bay Gay Men's Chorus "Pacem" Lake Merritt United Methodist Church, 1 p.m., $12-$20

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

Jazz and R&B Night Dorsey's Locker, 6:30 p.m., free

Jim Grantham Jazz Masters classic & contemporary jazz, Caffee Mia, 3-8 p.m., free

Loop! Ohana Cafe Van Kleef, 8 p.m.

The Randy Weaver Trio Nick's Lounge, 6:30-11 p.m., free

Terrence Brewer Trio Meze Revolution & Bar, 6:30-9 p.m., free

Kids

Kids Sundays Halloween Cabaret Carnival featuring the Kaleidoscope and members of Kaleidoscope Stage Troupe, Ashkenaz, 3 p.m., $4-$6

Rock & Pop

Impr & Band with [illegible] Fox Theater, 7:30 p.m., $35

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

Lalah Hathaway Yoshi's Oakland, 7 & 9 p.m., $26-$38

MoonCandy Live House Ensemble with [illegible] Sodan, Vous, 8:30 p.m., $8-$10

World, Latin, Reggae & Reggaeton

Suhaila Salimpour's Belly Dance Nights featuring students from Suhaila Salimpour School of Dance, Club Mallard's, 8 p.m., $7

SAN FRANCISCO

Blues, Folk & Country

The Brothers Casanova Thee Parkside, 4 p.m., free

Songwriter Sundays rotating artists perform in the lounge, Yoshi's San Francisco, 4 p.m.-midnight, $3

Tony Revolution Johnny Foley's Irish House, 9 p.m., free

Tommy Castro Biscuits & Blues, 7:30 & 9:30 p.m., $20

Classical & Opera

Maureen Brennan on piano for Sunday champagne brunch, Top of the Mark, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., $58 for brunch plus parking and tax

Psallite! A Candlelight Christmas San Francisco Bach Choir with Katherine Gaddard, mezzo-soprano, Bar the SFBC Baroque Orchestra, Calvary Presbyterian Church, 4 p.m., $15-$35

Gospel & Vocal

Gospel Brunch with Future Perfect & rotating guests, $3.00 on Fillmore, 11 a.m. & 1 p.m., $39; Oakland shows

Leah Tysse Rite Bar, 4:20 p.m., free

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

Oowee! the Bay Sunday relaxed series, Rhoma, 6 p.m., $28-$30, $65 dinner and show

Kurt Ribak Trio Chaya Brasserie, 6-9

4 p.m., free

Black Market 4 Ohana featuring Andrew Speight, Sam Grobe-Heintz & Mark Gilcrease, Brigadier Fillmore, 4:30 & 8:30 p.m., $5

Rock & Pop

The 4th Annual Oakland Olympics featuring Tenderfoot and Sleepy Sun guests, Makeshine, 4 p.m., free with RSVP

The Music Heart Procession with Chelsea Wolfe and Wil Sprott, Bottom of the Hill, 8:30 p.m., $15

Gross Encounter Hotel with White Magic and Lea Thom, Great American Music Hall, 8 p.m., $18

Obama da Trial Oakland "The Revolution Revolution" with special guest, Meta Utah, 8 p.m., $10-$12

Southward video work, Thee Parkside, 2 p.m., free

Club Gateway Brick & Mortar Music Hall, 9 p.m., $9-$12

Lucky Hotel with Rotary Bar Associates and Ready For Everything, Thee Parkside, 4 p.m., $5

Heavy Benevolence The Independent, 8 p.m., $20

Mournful Congregation with Aldebaran, Anhedonia, Bar sutures, Oakland Metro, 7 p.m., $15

Bruce Murphy with The Waits Revenge and Hostile Club, The Fillmore, 8 p.m., $38.50

MONDAY 5

EAST BAY

Blues, Folk & Country

"Uptown Mister Bebba" live burlesque with Hubba Hubba Revue, The Uptown, 8 p.m., $5

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

Jazzschool Oakland Room Masters Freight & Salvage Coffeehouse, 8 p.m., $14.50-$17.50

Rock & Pop

VENUE DIRECTORY

SAN FRANCISCO

1015 Folsom 1015 Folsom St., 415-431-1200.
330 Ritch 330 Ritch St., 415-541-9574.
111 Minna Gallery 111 Minna St., 415-974-1719.
222 Club 222 Hyde St., 415-440-0222.
330 Ritch 330 Ritch St., 415-541-9574.
1015 Folsom 1015 Folsom St., 415-431-1200.
Amnesia 853 Valencia St., 415-970-0012.
Amoeba Music 1855 Haight St., 415-831-1200.
Anchor 1350 Club St., 415-111-1010.
Bar Bar & Lounge 1 Tillman Pl., 415-362-6150.
Bazaar Cafe 5927 California St., 415-831-5620.
Bimbo's Music 1000 Great Highway, 415-386-8439.
Bottom Bar 2290 Mission St., 415-285-0973.
Bimbo's 365 Club 1025 Columbus Ave., 415-474-0365.
Biscuits & Blues 401 Mason St., 415-292-2583.
Boom Boom Room 1601 Fillmore St., 415-673-8000.
Bottom of the Hill 1233 17th St., 415-621-4455.
Brick & Mortar Music Hall 1710 Mission St., 415-800-8782.
Brava 2789 24th St., 415-641-5277.
Cafe du Nord 2170 Market St., 415-861-5016.
Cafe International 508 Haight St., 415-552-7390.
Caffe Trieste 609 Vallejo St., 415-982-2605.
Cat Club 1190 Folsom St., 415-431-3332.
The Cellar 685 Sutter St., 415-441-5678.
Chaya Brasserie 132 The Embarcadero, 415-777-8688.
Club Fugazi 678 Green St., 415-421-4222.
Club Six 60 Sixth St., 415-863-1221.
Davies Symphony Hall 201 Van Ness Ave., 415-864-6000.
DNA Lounge 375 11th St., 415-626-1409.
Dogpatch Saloon 2496 3rd St., 415-643-8592.
Edinburgh Castle 950 Geary St., 415-885-4074.
El Rio 3158 Mission St., 415-282-3325.
El Rincon 2700 16th St., 415-431-8540.
Elbo Room 647 Valencia St., 415-552-7788.
The EndUp 401 6th St., 415-646-0999.
The Fillmore 1805 Geary Blvd., 415-346-6000.
Great American Music Hall 859 O'Farrell St., 415-885-0750.
Hemlock Tavern 1131 Polk St., 415-923-0923.
Herbst Theatre 401 Van Ness Ave., 415-392-4400.
Hotel Utah 500 4th St., 415-546-6300.
The Independent 628 Divisadero St., 415-771-1421.
Ireland's 32 Bar & Grill 3920 Geary Blvd., 415-386-6173.
Johnny Foley's Irish House 243 O'Farrell St., 415-954-0777.
Kimo's 1351 Polk St., 415-885-4535.
The Knockout 3223 Mission St., 415-550-6994.
Madrone Lounge 500 Divisadero St., 415-241-0202.
Make-Out Room 3225 22nd St., 415-647-2888.
Revolution Cafe 3248 22nd St., 415-642-0474.
Mighty 119 Utah St., 415-762-0151.
Milk Bar 1840 Haight St., 415-387-6455.
The Music Room 00 West Portal Ave., 415-664-2044.
Noe Valley Ministry 1021 Sanchez St., 415-454-5238.
Park Chalet Brewery 1000 Great Highway, 415-386-8439.
Ruth Rockaway 1650 Powell St., 415-646-0018.
Rickshaw Stop 155 Fell St., 415-861-2011.
Bar Red Lounge 1695 Polk St., 415-321-1855.
Rite Spot Cafe 2099 Folsom St., 415-552-6445.
Hotel Lounge 624 29th St., 415-695-7580.
Roccapulco Stop 155 Fell St., 415-861-2011.
Rocco's Room 465 Grove St., 415-387-6344.
Royal Hotel 222 Market St., 415-284-1234.
Ruby Skye 420 Mason St., 415-693-0777.
San Francisco Conservatory of Music 50 Oak St., 415-503-6275.
Ship's Tavern 453 Cortland Ave., 415-282-2456.
Slajack 2089 16th St., 415-621-8054.
Slim's 333 11th St., 415-522-0333.
SOM Bar 2925 16th St., 415-558-8521.
Space 550 550 Barneveld Ave., 415-550-8286.
Stud Bar 399 9th St., 415-863-6623.
Sub/Mission Gallery 2183 Mission St., 415-255-7227.
Supperclub 657 Harrison St., 415-348-0900.
Swig Bar 561 Geary St., 415-931-7292.
Temple 540 Howard St., 415-978-9942.
Thee Parkside 1600 17th St., 415-252-1330.
Top of the Mark 999 California St., 415-616-6916.
Tunnel Top 601 Bush St., 415-986-8900.
Union Square 442 Broadway St., 415-773-0228.
The Oakland 932 Market St., 415-775-7722.
Yoshi's San Francisco 1330 Fillmore St., 415-655-5600.

C&C

Jazzschool Dance Bands with Brandis Keith Wheel, Rocky's Garage, 8 p.m. $15
Bangle Kali Pop with Swiftsure and King Lollipop, 1-2-3-4 Go Records, 7 p.m.
Bo and The Antique Never Was and CAMP, Vaux, 9 p.m. free

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

WAX The New Parish, 8 p.m. $15

SAN FRANCISCO

Blues, Folk & Country

Irish Session Herald's 32 Bar & Grill, 6 p.m. free

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

Le Jazz Hot Le Bourgogne, 7 p.m., free

Rock & Pop

Dones Johnny Foley's Irish House, 9 p.m. free
The Ghal with Young Digeest, Elbo Room, 9 p.m. $8
The Gan P Cake and Ela Ime, Great American Music Hall, 8 p.m. $21
Borando with Stevenson Evergreen, Elbo-vox, 3 Lemb, and Afalla Bally, Cafe du Nord, 8:30 p.m. $12-$10

TUESDAY 6

EAST BAY

Blues, Folk & Country

Andre Thierry and Zydeco Magic Yoshi's, 8 p.m. free
Andrew Carriere with Cajun/Zydeco dance lesson at 8 p.m., Ashkenaz, 8:30 p.m. $10
Country Western Dance Night and lessons, Vinnie's Bar & Grill, 7:30-11 p.m., free
Shanad Healy Pete's Restaurant, 7:30-9 p.m. free

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

Eddie Pasternak Trio with Ross Gusko, Cole Fergie, 8:30 p.m. free
Jazzschool and **Latin Jazz and Brazilian Ensembles** Freight & Salvage Coffeehouse, 8 p.m. $14.60-$12.50
Jazzschool Tuesdays featuring students from the Jazzschool music school, Jupiter 8 p.m. free
Ron Dibble dance jazz with guest cabaret singers, The Alley 8 p.m., free

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

The Blue Candle spoken word event with comedy and Ra, Dooey's Locker, 7 p.m., free
Insurspace Bands, 8 p.m. free

SAN FRANCISCO

All Ages

Stompy dance Verdi Club, 8:30 p.m., $10

Blues, Folk & Country

Fat Tuesday Grail Bonsara & drama, 5-8, 10 p.m. $13
Port Noor Sandstone with The Jenny Dads Woods, Hotel Utah, 8 p.m., $6-$8

Holiday Music

Harps and Voices featuring the Bay Area Youth Harp Ensemble and Celtic Harp Rad Ensemble, San Francisco Public Library, 7 p.m. free

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

Ricardo Scales playing soft jazz piano, Top of the Mark, 8:30-11:30 p.m. $8-$10
Tuesday Night Jump! Stompy dance plays swing jazz, plus a swing dance lesson, Verdi Club, 9 p.m. $10-$12

Wye Oak plays San Francisco's Bottom of the Hill... Auditorium & Gallery 12/3

Rock & Pop

Amo Gabl Great American Music Hall, 8 p.m. $17
Boonds Effes and Moonfoot and Atlas, Elbo Room, 9 p.m. $8
Diego + Alborada Park Chalet Brewery 6:30 p.m. free
Fred Gpod with Uncle Anne and Sugar Candy Mountain, Bottom of the Hill 8 p.m. Music Hall, 8 p.m. $5-$8
Jeffrey Lewis & The Junkyard and The Yellow Trees and Returned Garden, Hotel Utah Saloon, 8 p.m. $10
Lost Lander with Dominion City, Bottom of the Hill 9 p.m. $8
Tilted Lines with J.T.M., Cafe du Nord, 9 p.m. $12
Tussilago Greens with Wild Hunt, Acade Gonzalez and DJ Acoop, The Knockout, 9 p.m. $6

More Listings Online

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WEDNESDAY 7

EAST BAY

Blues, Folk & Country

Bay Area Home Society Company of Anthem Freight & Salvage Coffeehouse 8 p.m. $21.50-$22.50
Tommy Brothers old-time and bluegrass, Albatross Pub, 9 p.m., free

Holiday Music

Oakland City Center Holiday Concerts Oakland City Center, noon, free

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

Bob Cove & the Brown Wave Rooster's Roadhouse, 8-11 p.m. free
Jazz Theory Performance Class with Carl Saunders Velvet Gallery, 6-8 p.m.
Live Jazz Townhouse Bar & Grill, 7:30 p.m., free
Ron Dibble dance jazz with guest cabaret singers, The Alley, 8 p.m. free
Swing Thing with East Coast swing dance lesson at 8 p.m., Ashkenaz, 8:30 p.m.
Will Bassoto piano music, Campo di Bocce 6-9 p.m. free

Rock & Pop

Dave Rowley Quarantinees of classics, oldies, jazz & pop, Pete's Restaurant, 9 p.m. free
KALX 90.7 FM Presents, Big This! This week: Violent Vision, Primary Colors, San Cha, Pretty Rebels and Hungry Ghosts, The Uptown, 8:30 p.m. free
Mark Hammond & Friends Mama Buzz Cafe, 7 p.m. donations accepted
Moshogga Bands Party traditional Bands music meets instrumental surf music, Yoshi's Oakland, 7 p.m., $12
Anne Haddock with Piccolo, Vhub, 9 p.m. $5

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

Oaklandish Glee Rock Bash featuring Dynamic, California Honeydrops, Emily's Army, Bjorn DeVoe, Main Attractions, Peter Gorgone and Midway Bounds, The New Parish, 9 p.m. $12, $15

World, Latin, Reggae & Reggaeton

Kaseneed Night with Reggae Flash and DJ Mandeh, Dooey's Locker, 7-11 p.m. free

SAN FRANCISCO

Blues, Folk & Country

Bluegrass Country Jam w/ Jennie & Crush, Plough and Stars, 9 p.m. free
Karl Lemwolff with Jefen, Hotel Utah, 8 p.m. $10-$12
The Bounds Brown Bounds & Bows, 2 & 8 p.m. $24

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

Boz Marcato and the Moods Boom Boom Room at the Mark, 8:30-11:30 p.m. $10
Dick Bonfirm with Gouche & Bonds, Abraham, Amnesia, 7 p.m.
Grande with the Moonwalkers, Amnesia, 8 p.m. free

Rock & Pop

Casey & Brian and Band Bountiful Shooshed, Hemlock Tavern, 9 p.m., $7
Faron Crazimus and Animal Tyes, Trails & Ways and Team Nonset, Kelly's, 8 p.m. $6
Jonathan Richman Great Jonathan Rance Hat, 8 p.m. $10
Peaches Palace of Fine Arts, 8 p.m. $65

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

Pleasure Sessions Dance party with Billy Magic, Pleasuremaker, Mendell Cat Music, Rane Mahdis, and Kevin "The Wizard" Wong, Kosmo Dance Dance 9:30 p.m. $5
Sola Rosa Rock & Dance Music Hall, 9 p.m. $10, $12

World, Latin, Reggae & Reggaeton

Freddy Olsha and La Reade Latin, flamenco, Mediterranean, & contemporary folk, Pollo Piedmonte 8 p.m. $12 ●

Submissions for music listings should be e-mailed to Clubs@EastBayExpress.com or mailed to Clubs Editor, East Bay Express, 620 3rd St., Oakland, CA, 94607. Deadline is 14 days prior to the event date.

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DJ & DANCE

THURSDAY 1

EAST BAY

Academy Night w/ DJ and VJ Jon C. spinning hip-hop, R&B, dancehall, & Top 40. White Horse Inn, 9 p.m., $3, Mezzed free w/ valid ID.

Club Fever w/ Sasson Dom Sound spinning reggae & dancehall. Shashamane Wenana East, 10 p.m., free.

Dance Club w/ Trashcat Karlo & Chris Fox. Shattuck Down Low, 9 p.m., free.

Delicious Thursdays Radio, 10 p.m., free.

DJ Adell [illegible] eclectic mix nerdy. Kingman's Lucky Lounge, 9 p.m., free.

DJ Aware [illegible] Layover, 9 p.m., free.

DJ Night DJs spinning funk, pop, mind-blowing rock, & urban hip-hop. Kip's Restaurant, 9:30 p.m., free.

DJ extra spinning lounge. Lost Weekend Lounge, 8 p.m.-2 a.m., free.

Drop Top Disco w/ Salvatore Valentino, Vaderme Computer & Jay Sonic. The Layover, 10 p.m., free.

lounge lounge w/ [illegible], [illegible] Pyle, and Uncle Joe. Luka's Taproom & Lounge, 8 p.m., free.

[illegible] indie pop, mash-ups, new wave. Radio, 10 p.m.-2 a.m., free.

Salsa Night w/ DJ Eddie [illegible] plus Retro lessons. [illegible], 9 p.m., $10.

Suburbia [illegible] w/ DJ [illegible] and [illegible]. Jupiter, 8 p.m., free.

Tasty ladies' night w/ DJ [illegible] spinning hip-hop & R&B. Club 21, 9 p.m., $12-$15.

Lounge of Retro w/ DJ Fluid Cut spinning hip-hop, R&B. The Missouri Lounge, 10 p.m., free.

We Got Freedom spinning DJ Tasso spinning '70s & '80s hits. Forbidden Retro, 8 p.m., free.

Venue Dance Shebeeb featuring live Carlos Mena and Carol. Dance and free, 8 p.m., free.

FRIDAY 2

EAST BAY

[illegible] w/ DJs [illegible] and His Friends spinning fast raps and slow jams. The Missouri Lounge, 10 p.m., free.

Club 21 w/ DJs spinning Latin music. Club 21, 9 p.m., $8-$15.

Spinning w/ DJ [illegible] DJ Ryan spinning the [illegible] in the Bay Area. White Horse Inn, 8 p.m., $4.

DJ Night DJs spinning dancehall, pop, mind-blowing rock, & urban hip-hop. Kip's Restaurant, 9:30 p.m., free.

DJ lounge The Layover, 9 p.m., free.

Elevation w/ DJ Hali the Vinyl Archaeologist The Layover, 10 p.m.

Friday Night Salsa w/ guest DJs spinning salsa. La Shamsah Cafe, 10 p.m., $5.

Friday Nite Jams w/ DJ Supa K, Foom, 10 p.m., $5.

Happy Hours w/ DJ Golden Gram spinning punk, rock, indie, & noise rock. The Irie Soul Lounge, 6-10 p.m., free.

Hip-Hop Dance Music w/ Retro DJ, Club 1220, 8 p.m., $6.

Latin Explosion DJ Jorge Estiene spinning cumbia, salsa, merengue, banda, Spanish pop, & more. Dance and free 9 [illegible] a.m., $8-$15.

Shebeeb weekly Missouri DJ sideshow.

More Listings Online

Get info about hundreds of music events at EastBayExpress.com or m.EastBayExpress.com

Amoeba Music, 7-10 p.m., free.

Old-School hip-hop and funk. Radio, 9 p.m., free.

Dance Night w/ DJ [illegible] spinning reggae, [illegible] soka, & R&B. Retro Paradise Club, 10 p.m., ladies free before 11:30 p.m.

Retro-Bolero [illegible] '80s pop night. Kingman's Lucky Lounge, 9 p.m., free.

Sultry Fridays DJ Lush & [illegible] R&B & soul. Kimball's Carnival, 8 p.m., $8.

Toasty w/ DJ [illegible] spinning [illegible] soul, Motown, '80s, Retro punk, new wave, & rock 'n' roll. Ruby Room, 10 p.m., free.

Vybz Int'l w/ DJs roots, Lenox, & House spinning roots, reggae, dancehall, & soul. Shashamane Restaurant, 10 p.m., $5.

World Beat Fridays featuring DJ [illegible] spinning [illegible], soca, samba, salsa, merengue, dancehall reggae, [illegible] Arabic Music, & more. Conga Lounge, 10 p.m.

SATURDAY 3

EAST BAY

All Productions & Handsdale Inc spinning R&B & hip-hop. Foxes, 10 p.m., free.

Club Dance Vs. DOPE White Horse Inn, 9 p.m., $5-$7.

Club Maxwell's DJs Jerry Mack & Soul Profess spin R&B, soul, funk, reggae, & hip-hop. Maxwell's Lounge, 8 p.m., $10.

Club [illegible] w/ [illegible] Club, Oga T & guests spinning hip-hop & R&B. Dance and Bar 9 [illegible], $8-$12.

DJ Night DJs [illegible] funkadelic pop, mind-blowing rock, & urban hip-hop. Kip's Restaurant, 9:30 p.m., free.

Dancehall, Saturday Night w/ [illegible]. White Horse Inn, 8 p.m., $5.

Dance Saturdays Club 1220, 9 p.m., $5.

La Bola Loca Latino cowboy night w/ DJs spinning salsa, merengue, & banda, plus live go-go vaqueros. Club 21, 9 p.m., $8-$15.

Magic [illegible] DJ Dave & guests host genre-melting extravaganza. Kingman's Lucky Lounge, 9 p.m., free.

Dance Treaty with Candy Land and Elephant Guns. Shattuck Down Low, 9 p.m., $10-$12.

Pop lounge DJ [illegible] pop hits from free Stooges to Michael Wonder. Ruby Room, 10 p.m.-2 a.m., free.

Reggae Night Conga Lounge, 10 p.m., free.

Smoove Saturdays DJ Jamo & guests spin soul, hip-hop, R&B, salsa, reggaeton, & more. Luka's Taproom & Lounge, 9 p.m., $5.

Soinguer Balance w/ DJ Rumbero. Shattuck Down Low, 9 p.m., $10, $5 Missouri.

Wave-Up w/ DJ Fluid Cut spinning hip-hop, R&B. The Missouri Lounge, 6-10 p.m., free.

SUNDAY 4

EAST BAY

DJ Ready Kingman's Lucky Lounge, 9 p.m., free.

"King of Kings" DJ Single-Bro and guests spin reggae, dancehall, roots, & lovers' rock. Shattuck Down Low, 9 p.m., $10, [illegible]/Missouri free before 11 p.m.

Mojar w/ DJ [illegible] spinning soul, funk, & Afrocentric old-school. Sea or free & Lounge, 9 p.m., free.

Post-Antiques Fair Retro Lounge featuring DJs spinning rock 'n' roll and more. Forbidden Island, 3 p.m., free.

The Soul-Full Glow DJ Aebl Bled & guests spin soulful grooves. Luka's Taproom & Lounge, 9 p.m., free.

Uncle Fun's Elis Sundays DJs spin ska, rocksteady, & roots reggae. The Hatty Intra Club, 7 p.m., free.

MONDAY 5

EAST BAY

High Life w/ DJ Shebeeb Afrine. The Layover, 10 p.m., free.

Mongo Soul featuring Bix B-Sharp, The New Parish, 10 p.m., $5.

Wanna Night Out? w/ DJ K-Tel Missouri rock and roll, soft hits, oldies, & soul. The Missouri Lounge, 10 p.m., free.

TUESDAY 6

EAST BAY

DJ Night DJs spinning dancehall, pop, mind-blowing rock, & urban hip-hop. Kip's Restaurant, 9:30 p.m., free.

DJ Wooly spinning punk. Lost Weekend Lounge, 8 p.m.-2 a.m., free.

Escape college night featuring DJ Spandy & DJ Roxy. Club 21, 9 p.m., $10.

Jazz Cellar Spins Vinyl Duane Volume, 9 p.m., free.

Stay Punk DJ w/ DJ Shebeeb spinning indie, punk, hardcore, & metal. The Missouri Lounge, 10 p.m., free.

WEDNESDAY 7

EAST BAY

Hump Day w/ DJs Ax & [illegible] Nasalem of Anteon. The Missouri Lounge, 10 p.m.-2 a.m., free.

The Jet Set w/ DJ Santero and George guests. Luka's Taproom & Lounge, 9 p.m., free.

The 1980s, '90s Retro Only Hip-Hop w/ DJs Missouri hip-hop. Club 21, 9 p.m., $8-$15.

Nauride dancehall w/ DJ Foo Dog. The Layover, 9 p.m., free.

Metal Night featuring Last Angry Moment spinning metal vinyl, and more. Merchant's Saloon, 10 p.m., free.

'70s & Strobe featuring DJ Otto. Forbidden Island, 8 p.m., free.

Persuasion Latin cowboy night w/ live Veleta Banda and free 7 p.m., $8-$15.

Dance Punk, indie, new wave, & classic rock w/ DJ Isaac Dean Money. Ruby Retro, 10 p.m.-2 a.m., free.

Slippery Wet Wednesdays poetry, open mic, and live DJ. Foxes, 10 p.m., free.

PICK

He's the DJ, I'm the Rapper

Emcee Z-Man and DJ True Justice say they intend to emphasize the convivial aspect of hip-hop in their forthcoming hip-hop showcase, rather than just treat the genre as a form of performance art. Sure, they'll feature some icons, including Freestyle Fellowship frontman Aceyalone, Bored Stiff lyricist Equipto, and Aesop, a still-largely-underrated member of the Living Legends crew. But the organizers are less concerned with individual star power than overall atmosphere. To that end, they've recruited two stand-up comedians to yuk it up between sets, and they've promised the event will be more of a dance party than a traditional lineup. True Justice: that's on you. *At Club Six (60 Sixth St., San Francisco) on Saturday Dec. 3, 9 p.m., $10. ClubSix1.com* — *Rachel Swan*

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THE STARRY PLOUGH PUB

THU 12/1 8:30PM $8-$10 Folk/Roots Music Label-Sibling Legend Records: WHISKERMAN, CASH PONY, [illegible]

FRI 12/2 8:30PM $7-$10 [illegible] Rock and Flying Feats of Improv: RECARDIACS FLY, [illegible]

SAT 12/3 THE STEVE BLOCK MEMORIAL BOOGIE: GRAPEFRUIT 99, J.C. FLYER, [illegible]

THU 12/8 8:00PM $12 [illegible] Punk-Pop: BITCH (NYC), AND [illegible] GUEST JENNY HOYSTON, [illegible]

FRI 12/9 8:30PM $8 Pop Rock and California Harmonies: BIG LIGHT, [illegible], AGANA

SAT 12/10 8:30PM $7-$10 PINTS & [illegible] AT THE PLOUGH: EMILY BONN & THE VIVANTS, ZOE MUTH & THE LOST HIGH ROLLERS, [illegible]

KITCHEN OPEN DAILY

IRISH MUSIC SESSION W/ SHAY BLACK

STARRY PLOUGH IRISH CEILI

TUESDAY FREE OPEN MIC W/ JOAN PIZ

THE BERKELEY SLAM, TOURING POETS, [illegible]

YOUTH OPEN MIC

THE EAST BAY'S LONGEST OPERATING [illegible]

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THUR 10PM JUNGLE BOOGIE — DJs POIZEN & KOOL KYLE — hip hop, soul & your requests

FRI 10PM $5 EARGASM — RESIDENT DJs SPAIR & NERD OF THE OAKLAND FADERS, HOSTED BY [illegible] — [illegible] & old school

SAT 10PM SMOOVE SATURDAYS — DJ JAMO & GUEST DJs — hip hop, neo soul & [illegible]

SUN 9PM THE SOUL-FULL GLOW — RESIDENT DJ AEBLDEE — soulful music for dancing. Get up!!

MON 9PM THREE DAY WEEKEND — DJ [illegible] — funky hip hop & soul classics

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11/9, 11/16, 11/23, 11/30/2011

Fictitious Business Name Statement
File # 457627

[illegible]

11/9, 11/16, 11/23, 11/30, 2011

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME
CASE NUMBER: [illegible]

[illegible] Superior Court [illegible] Judge of the Superior Court

11/16, 11/23, 11/30, 12/7/2011

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE # 457150

[illegible]

11/9, 11/16, 11/23, 11/30/2011

Fictitious Business Name Statement
File # [illegible]

[illegible]

11/16, 11/23, 11/30, 12/7/2011

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME
CASE NUMBER: [illegible]

[illegible] Judge of the Superior Court

11/16, 11/23, 11/30, 12/7/2011

Fictitious Business Name Statement
File # 457368

[illegible]

11/16, 11/23, 11/30, 12/7/2011

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE # 457000

[illegible]

11/9, 11/16, 11/23, 11/30, 2011

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME
CASE NUMBER: [illegible]

[illegible] Judge of the Superior Court

11/23, 11/30, 12/7, 12/14/2011

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE # 457709

[illegible]

11/9, 11/16, 11/23, 11/30/2011

Fictitious Business Name Statement
File # 457708

[illegible]

11/9, 11/16, 11/23, 11/30/2011

Fictitious Business Name Statement
File # 458457

[illegible]

11/23, 11/30, 12/07, 12/14/2011

Fictitious Business Name Statement
File # 458153

[illegible]

11/23, 11/30, 12/07, 12/14/2011

Fictitious Business Name Statement
File # 457650

[illegible]

NOTICE of Vehicle Lien; Abandonment

[illegible]

11/23, 11/30, 12/7, 12/14/2011

Fictitious Business Name Statement
File # 458126

[illegible]

11/23, 11/30, 12/07, 12/14/2011

Fictitious Business Name Statement
File # 458127

[illegible]

11/23, 11/30, 12/07, 12/14/2011

Fictitious Business Name Statement
File # 458152

[illegible]

Fictitious Business Name Statement
File # 458134

[illegible]

11/16, 11/23, 11/30, 12/7/2011

Name Statement
File # 458033

[illegible]

11/23, 11/30, 12/7, 12/14/2011

Fictitious Business Name Statement
File # 457917

[illegible]

11/16, 11/23, 11/30, 12/07/2011

Fictitious Business Name Statement
File # 458038

[illegible]

11/9, 11/16, 11/23, 11/30/2011

Fictitious Business Name Statement
File # 458260

[illegible]

11/16, 11/23, 11/30, 12/14/2011

Fictitious Business Name Statement
File # 458213

[illegible]

11/9, 11/16, 11/23, 11/30/2011

Fictitious Business Statement of Abandonment of use of Fictitious Business Name Statement
File # 400734

[illegible]

The Ark newspaper
11/9, 11/16, 11/23,

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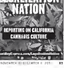
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Trustee Sale No. 442770CA Loan No. 0709945514 Title Order No. 433583 NOTICE OF TRUSTEE'S SALE YOU ARE IN DEFAULT UNDER A DEED OF TRUST DATED 01-12-2006. UNLESS YOU TAKE ACTION TO PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY, IT MAY BE SOLD AT A PUBLIC SALE. IF YOU NEED AN EXPLANATION OF THE NATURE OF THE PROCEEDINGS AGAINST YOU, YOU SHOULD CONTACT A LAWYER. On 12-07-2011 at 12:00 PM, CALIFORNIA RECONVEYANCE COMPANY as the duly appointed Trustee under and pursuant to Deed of Trust Recorded 01-31-2006, Book , Page , Instrument 2006031970, of official records in the Office of the Recorder of ALAMEDA County, California, executed by: HEECHUNG CHRISTY CHEONG, A SINGLE WOMAN, as Trustor, WASHINGTON MUTUAL BANK, FA, as Beneficiary, will sell at public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash, cashier's check drawn by a state or national bank, a cashier's check drawn by a state or federal credit union, or a cashier's check drawn by a state or federal savings and loan association, savings association, or savings bank specified in section 5102 of the Financial Code and authorized to do business in this state. Sale will be held by the duly appointed trustee as shown below, of all right, title, and interest conveyed to and now held by the trustee in the hereinafter described property under and pursuant to the Deed of Trust. The sale will be made, but without covenant or warranty, expressed or implied, regarding title, possession, or encumbrances, to pay the remaining principal sum of the note(s) secured by the Deed of Trust, interest thereon, estimated fees, charges and expenses of the Trustee for the total amount (at the time of the initial publication of the Notice of Sale) reasonably estimated to be set forth below. The amount may be greater on the day of sale. Place of Sale: AT THE FALLON STREET EMERGENCY EXIT TO THE ALAMEDA COUNTY COURTHOUSE, 1225 FALLON ST., OAKLAND, CA Legal Description: As more fully described in said Deed of Trust Amount of unpaid balance and other charges: $561,395.93 (estimated) Street address and other common designation of the real property: 4316 ESSEX STREET EMERYVILLE, CA 94608 APN Number: 049-1161-024-00 The undersigned Trustee disclaims any liability for any incorrectness of the street address and other common designation, if any, shown herein. The property heretofore described is being sold "as is". In compliance with California Civil Code 2923.5(c) the mortgagee, trustee, beneficiary, or authorized agent declares: that it has contacted the borrower(s) to assess their financial situation and to explore options to avoid foreclosure; or that it has made efforts to contact the borrower(s) to assess their financial situation and to explore options to avoid foreclosure by one of the following methods: by telephone; by United States mail; either 1st class or certified; by overnight delivery; by personal delivery; by e-mail; by face to face meeting. DATE: 11-08-2011 CALIFORNIA RECONVEYANCE COMPANY, as Trustee MARCO RIVERA, ASSISTANT SECRETARY CALIFORNIA RECONVEYANCE COMPANY IS A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT. ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE. California Reconveyance Company 9200 Oakdale Avenue Mail Stop: CA2-4379 Chatsworth, CA 91311 800-892-6902 For Sales Information: (714) 730-2727 or www.lpsasap.com (714) 573-1965 or www.priorityposting.com P885962 11/16, 11/23, 11/30/2011

Title Order No.: 4575312 Trustee Sale No.: 206805 NOTICE OF TRUSTEE'S SALE YOU ARE IN DEFAULT UNDER A NOTICE OF DELIQUENT ASSESSMETNS. UNLESS YOU TAKE ACTION TO PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY, IT MAY BE SOLD AT A PUBLIC SALE. IF YOU NEED AN EXPLANATION OF THE NATURE OF THE PROCEEDINGS AGAINST YOU, YOU SHOULD CONTACT A LAWYER. On 12/7/2011 at 12:00 PM, Pro Solutions, as the duly appointed Trustee pursuant to the Notice of Lien Assessment, filed by Emerville Warehouse Lofts, recorded on 03/24/2009, as Instrument No. 2009-087659, of Official Records in the Office of the Recorder of Alameda, California, property owned by: Mrs. Annette Leigh Chu WILL SELL AT PUBLIC AUCTION TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER FOR CASH (payable at time of sale in lawful money of the United States, by cash, a cashier's check drawn by a state or national bank, a check drawn by a state or federal credit union, or a check drawn by a state or federal savings and loan association, business in this state). At the Fallon St emergency exit to the Alameda County Courthouse, 1225 Fallon St, Oakland, CA 94612, all right, title and interest under said Notice of Lien Assessment in the property situated in said county, describing the land therein: as per Grant Deed, Condominium Unit No. 219 lying within Building A on Lot 1 of Tract Map 6991 filed, October 19, 1998 in Book 242 of Maps, Pages 3 and 4 Official Records, as as such unit 99-016323, Official Records and as described in that certain Emerville Warehouse Lofts Declaration of Restrictions ("Declaration"), recorded January 14, 1999, Series No. 99-016324, Official Records. Assessor's Parcel Number 049-1035-060 Said sale shall be subject to a 90 day right of redemption period per the requirements of the California Civil Code section 1367.4(c)(4). The street address and other common designation, if any, of the real property described above is purported to be: 1500 Park Avenue Unit 219, Emeryville, CA 94608 The undersigned Trustee disclaims any liability for any incorrectness of the street address and other common designation, if any, shown herein. Said sale will be made, but without covenant or warranty, expressed or implied, regarding title, possession, or encumbrances, to pay the remaining principal sum due under said Notice of Lien Assessment, with interest thereon, as provided in said notice, advances, in any, estimated fees, charges and expenses of the Trustee, to wit: $23,629.72 Estimated Accrued interest and additional advances, if any, will increase this figure prior to sale. The claimant under said Notice of Lien Assessment heretofore executed and delivered to the undersigned a written Declaration of Default and Demand for Sale, and a written Notice of Default and Election to Sell. The undersigned caused said Notice of Default and election to Sell to be recorded in the county where the property is located and more than three months have elapsed since such recordation. For sale information, please contact (714) 573-1965 or go to www.priorityposting.com Dated: 10/10/2011 PRO SOLUTIONS P.O. Box 311 Pittsburg, CA 94565 (925) 432-9884 J. Keller Association Agent Trustee Sale No. 206805 P880644 11/16, 11/23, 11/30/2011

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dyke (dīk) **1.** be honest with yourself, you're not thinking of "an embankment that holds back and controls water." the problem is, words like "dyke" and "faggot" are so commonly used as insults these days, it's really hard to remember a time when they weren't. **2.** so please, knock it off. **3.** learn more at ThinkB4YouSpeak.com

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SAVAGE LOVE

GOOD, GIVING, AND GAME

The ins and outs of GGG

By Dan Savage

I'm a 21-year-old woman from Canada who sleeps with other women. I am also a really kinky person. I've been very sexually active and into BDSM since I was sixteen. I have a large toy collection and many of the toys are dildos and anal plugs. I like anal a lot, but the thought of vaginal just doesn't interest me, so I've never gone there. I've read about how breaking the hymen can hurt and — despite the fact that I enjoy being flogged and scratched — that scares me a little. Should I get over it and go to town or stick with everything else that works for me?

Good Gay Girl

"Tearing the hymen doesn't always hurt and rarely hurts with any severity," said Debby Herbenick, sex researcher, vulva puppeteer, and coauthor (with Vanessa Schick) of *Read My Lips: A Complete Guide to the Vagina and Vulva*. "Going slow with a smallish well-lubricated dildo is a good place to start, or two or three well-lubricated fingers. Doing that while highly aroused sets you up for a better experience."

But before you explore vaginal penetration, GGG, Herbenick recommends a trip to your nearest female-friendly sex toy shop. "If most of your toys have been used in the anus/rectum," said Herbenick, "it would be wise to get a new vagina toy."

While most women enjoy vaginal penetration, GGG, not all women do. If you decide vaginal penetration isn't for you, that's a preference to which you're entitled.

I was chatting with a guy and he mentioned that one time this girl accidentally vomited all over him during oral sex. He confessed that this turned him on. I consider myself GGG, but that is not something I'm game for. The thought of puking in a sexual scenario is completely unappealing. Does my refusal to do that revoke my GGG card? Or is this so out of the norm that I can refuse without losing my GGG card?

Pleasing Upchucking ≠ Kinky Extremism?

Let's revisit my original definition of GGG: "GGG stands for good, giving, and game, which is what we should all strive to be for our sex partners. Think good in bed, giving equal time and equal pleasure, and game for anything — within reason."

Some kinksters skip past the "within reason" part of the definition when they're discussing kinks with vanilla partners. They shouldn't. Extreme bondage or SM, shit and puke, emotionally tricky humiliation play, demanding that your partner have sex with other people (because it turns you on, forcing your partner to assume all of the physical risks that go along with that, to say nothing of the emotional risks for a partner who isn't interested in having sex with other people), etc. — all of that falls under the FTF exclusion, or a "fetish too far," which you'll find in the fine print on the back of your GGG card, PUKE.

I'm a twenty-year-old female college student living with my 23-year-old boyfriend. We've been dating for two years, and our sex life has always been awesome. My boyfriend has a high libido, so high that I can't always get him off when he wants it. He says I don't want to have sex with him when we have sex probably four times a week and I'm totally happy to give him head, jerk him off, or take off my clothes for him any other time he asks. Whenever we sit down together, he's immediately horny and he gets cranky when I have to say no. Is this a ridiculously high libido? I try to be GGG and he does the same for me, but I hate feeling guilty about not having sex with him constantly. I've started just telling him to masturbate to porn, and he does it willingly but usually whines a little first about how I "never" want to have sex. Totally false! My body just can't take it every day. What do I do?

My Boyfriend Is Incredibly Horny

You're not trying to be GGG, MBIIH, you are GGG.

Your boyfriend doesn't realize how good he's got it. He isn't lacking for sex; what he lacks is perspective. He clearly doesn't understand or appreciate what it's like to be on the receiving end of all that dick. Saying something like this might help him understand: "You know I love you, honey, and you know I love having sex with you. But if your hole got fucked every time we have sex, you wouldn't want to have sex more than four times a week, either." (I'm putting "sex" in quotes here because your boyfriend defines sex as "vaginal intercourse." I do not. Oral, handjobs, and visuals-with-a-partner — all of that counts as sex.)

If that doesn't do the trick, MBIIH, buy your boyfriend a dildo that's roughly the same size as his dick. Then tell him he can fuck your hole whenever he wants, for as long as he wants — so long as he fucks his own hole first while you watch. Then he can fuck yours. That might help him appreciate how good he's got it.

I'm into "ball busting" — getting slapped or kicked in the nuts — but my wife was never willing. I did something stupid and saw an escort just to get my balls busted, and my wife found out. She was talking about divorce when she told her best friend what was going on. Her friend told her to read your archives first.

You probably don't hear this from conservative Christian Republicans in red states very often, Mr. Savage, but my sense of honor requires it of me: Thank you for saving my marriage. This "GGG" concept of yours transformed our marriage — it also led my wife to either discover or open up about her kink — and we are happier than ever. It isn't lost on me that I have a gay man to thank for keeping us from becoming another divorce statistic.

Busted And Loving Life Supremely

You're welcome, BALLS, and all I ask in return for saving your marriage — besides video — is your support for the full legal recognition of mine. Deal? ●

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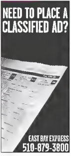

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